

Iraq rejects Iranian report

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq said Wednesday Iranian reports of fighting in northern Iraq in fact were only sporadic "trivial actions," by Iranian-backed saboteurs. The Iraqi News Agency quoted a military spokesman as saying Iraqi armed forces and pro-government Kurds had encountered such actions and inflicted, particularly on the Iranian forces, heavy losses in men and equipment. Iraq had claimed its forces and anti-Baghdad Kurdish guerrilla had launched a surprise attack on Wednesday on Iraqi positions northeast of Baghdad, killing or wounding 600 troops and capturing 98 others. The Iraqi spokesman said: "What is going on is some trivial actions carried out from time to time by saboteurs supported by the Iranian regime who were lying and 'the area is fully under Iraqi armed forces control.'" A high command communiqué said Iraqi warplanes and helicopter gunships flew 215 sorties and combat missions on Wednesday against Iranian posts along the Gulf waterfront but made no reference to ground fighting in the north or elsewhere.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردين تايمز مؤسسة الصحافة الأردنية "الرأي"

Fahd begins visit to France

PARIS (AP) — President Francois Mitterrand greeted King Fahd of Saudi Arabia as he arrived in Paris Wednesday for a two-day state visit, the last in a series of trips that has taken the monarch from Algeria to Britain. There has been no official indication of the topics to be discussed with Mr. Mitterrand and Premier Jacques Chirac, but it is thought they will cover the Middle East problem and the Iran-Iraq war. King Fahd's visit comes amid fierce competition between France, Britain, West Germany, Italy and the Netherlands for a 23-billion franc (nearly \$4-billion) Saudi naval contract. In mid-March, France concluded a 3.5-billion franc (about \$563-million) contract to equip Saudi internal security forces. It is now vying to supply the kingdom with six to eight submarines and to construct a military town and naval base in Jeddah. France last year imported 23 per cent of its oil from Saudi Arabia, making that country its prime oil supplier. But improving relations have recently taken a decidedly political turn, with recent visits by the French defence and interior ministers to Riyadh and visits by Saudi officials to Paris.

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Klibi assails Israeli actions

TUNIS (R) — The head of the Arab League on Wednesday condemned as barbaric Israel's reaction to an upsurge of Palestinian resistance in Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza. Arab League Secretary General Chadi Klibi said thousands of Israelis had besieged the Palestinian town of Kalkilya, attacked innocent civilians and laid waste to fields "in sight of and with knowledge of Israeli forces, who do nothing to stop these atrocities." "Israeli leaders want their voice to dominate all others and that the world only have ears for their claims for liberty for Jews, for the rights of Jews, and Jewish attachment to the 'motherland,'" he said in a statement. "But they reply with violence and barbarity as any demonstration expressing the aspiration of Arab populations to independence, or their attachment to a state, whether it is in the West Bank, Gaza or Golan, or even their love of freedom."

Businessmen return, thank Mubarak

AMMAN (Petra) — A delegation made up of members of the Jordanian-Egyptian Business Council returned home on Wednesday after a four-day visit to Egypt during which they discussed bilateral economic and trade relations to support the joint march of the two countries. The council's president, Mandouh Abu Hassan, sent a cable to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak expressing thanks and appreciation for receiving the delegation and said that the council's meetings gave fruitful and positive results that would boost the joint economic march between Jordan and Egypt.

Tehran criticises Soviet Union

BAHRAIN (AP) — Iran on Wednesday criticised the Soviet Union's decision to rent oil tankers to Kuwait, whose shipping has been a frequent target of missile-armed Iranian gunboats. But the head of Kuwait's state-owned tanker fleet has denied his country is renting the Soviet ships, which could be less vulnerable to attack because of their nationality. Moscow has confirmed the tanker-leasing deal on Tuesday. In Tehran, a Foreign Ministry spokesman described the Soviet move as "surprising" and warned that only Gulf nations were entitled to intervene in regional issues.

Soviet leaders meet U.S. delegation

MOSCOW (AP) — Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev and President Andrei Gromyko met at the Kremlin on Wednesday with a U.S. congressional delegation led by Jim Wright, speaker of the House of Representatives. The delegates met Mr. Gorbachev a day after the Soviet Communist Party general secretary revealed some new arms control proposals in a meeting with U.S. Secretary of State George P. Shultz. No details were released on the Wright meeting with Mr. Gorbachev. The Soviet news agency TASS said Mr. Gromyko told the Wright delegation that Mr. Gorbachev's new proposals "do not present a basis for an accord."

INSIDE

- Switzerland to help U.S. in Iran arms probe, page 2
- Regent meets Syrian minister, page 3
- Deportation of Arabs under U.S. subversion act is challenged, page 4
- Exhibition combines quality, scholarship and puzzles of history, page 5
- Kenyan Safari begins today, page 6
- S. Yemen announces first major oil find, page 7
- Aquino seeks more U.S. military aid, page 8

Palestinians keep up protests and strikes

Jews visit Haram Al Sharif under army escort

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Merchants in the occupied West Bank town of Ramallah closed their shops for the third straight day Wednesday to protest the killing of a Palestinian student who was shot dead by Israeli soldiers.

Birzeit University officials met to discuss ways to continue studies for the school's 3,000 students following the Israeli army's order that the campus be closed for four months. The army issued the order Monday after 23-year-old Musa Al Hanafi was shot to death when Israeli troops stormed the Birzeit campus to disperse hundreds of student demonstrators. The Birzeit clash followed by one day the killing of an Israeli settler who burned to death after attackers threw a firebomb at the car she was travelling in near the West Bank settlement of Alfei Menashe.

Israeli planes fly over Syrian positions in Sidon

SIDON, Lebanon (AP) — Sonic booms cracked over this southern port city Wednesday as Israeli warplanes apparently made reconnaissance flights, a day after Syrian troops deployed at Sidon's outskirts, police said. The Syrian deployment on the northern outskirts of Sidon Tuesday is the farthest south they have been since Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982. A police statement said two Israeli jet fighters also broke the sound barriers over Beirut, 40 kilometres to the north. No air attacks were reported in both missions. "It seems the Israelis were flying an apparent reconnaissance mission over the new Syrian area of deployment," said a police spokesman.

Soldier killed in E. Beirut blast

BEIRUT (Agencies) — A Lebanese soldier was killed when a time-bomb blew up in a fashionable suburb of east Beirut on Wednesday, an army bomb disposal expert said. The Lebanese army's chief bomb disposal officer, Yusef Bitar, told Reuters the bomb exploded in the soldier's Mercedes saloon, blowing him to pieces. Local radios said the 1100 GMT blast triggered several fires, and militiamen cordoned off the fashionable residential area of Jal Al Deeh, on the northern edge of Beirut. It was the third car bombing in the mainly Christian eastern sector of the Lebanese capital in less than a week. On Sunday, two car bombs exploded within five minutes in the suburb of Sadd Al Bouchrieh. Thirteen civilians were injured by police control.

Libya and Iraq said closer to normal ties

SHARJAH (AP) — Libya and Iraq are moving towards restoring diplomatic relations, and a senior Iraqi delegation was expected in Tripoli later this month for further talks, a newspaper reported Wednesday. Libya is Iran's ally in the Gulf war against Iraq, and ties between Baghdad and Tripoli were severed in 1985. Libyan leader Col. Muammar Qadhafi has begun in recent months distancing himself from Iran over Tehran's refusal to discuss peace. He has called for an end to the 6½-year-old conflict. The Sharjah-based newspaper Al Khaleej quoted unidentified Arab sources in the Libyan capital as saying that an Iraqi team, led by Fadi Al Barak, the former security chief, visited Libya March 28. "A lot of progress towards resuming diplomatic relations has been scored," the daily said. Al Khaleej also quoted unidentified diplomatic sources as saying that a mediation bid by Saudi Arabia has succeeded in drawing up an agreement between Iraq and Syria.

Under the agreement, Iraq would resume pumping its crude oil through Syrian territory to the Mediterranean port of Banias. The agreement was the outcome of an Iraqi-Syrian meeting held in Riyadh recently, the sources said. It did not elaborate. There was no confirmation from the Saudi capital on the report. Syria blocked the pipeline in April 1982 as part of its support for Iran in the war, cutting Iraq's only oil export outlets at a time when its Gulf oil ports were closed by the fighting. The Iraqis have since developed oil export outlets through Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

Iranians rocket sheep freighter

BAHRAIN (AP) — A Philippines-flag vessel sailing to Kuwait with a load of Australian sheep was attacked and set ablaze Wednesday by an Iranian gunboat in the central sector of the Gulf, shipping executives reported. Gulf-based marine salvage executives said no casualties were reported among the crew of the stricken 17,950-tonne Corriedale Express. It was not clear what had happened to the sheep caught in the blaze. The attack took place about 130 kilometres northeast of Qatar at 12:45 a.m. Three tugboats rushed to help the stricken vessel and about three hours later were reported to be bringing the fire under control, the executives said. The ship was the eighth Kuwaiti-related vessel to be attacked by the Iranians this year. It was carrying the load from the Australian port of Adelaide. The London-based Lloyds shipping intelligence unit, which monitors shipping traffic around the world, quoted the captain of the vessel as saying in his Mayday message that the Corriedale Express was "attacked by two Iranian rockets."

The salvage executives said that the raiding gunboat only used rocket-propelled grenades, a new practice to which the Iranians have resorted recently. The attack took place about 130 kilometres northeast of Qatar at 12:45 a.m. Three tugboats rushed to help the stricken vessel and about three hours later were reported to be bringing the fire under control, the executives said. The ship was the eighth Kuwaiti-related vessel to be attacked by the Iranians this year. It was carrying the load from the Australian port of Adelaide. The London-based Lloyds shipping intelligence unit, which monitors shipping traffic around the world, quoted the captain of the vessel as saying in his Mayday message that the Corriedale Express was "attacked by two Iranian rockets."

Tindemans begins talks reaffirming EC commitment towards Mideast conference

By Salameh B. Ne'matt with agency dispatches

AMMAN — Belgian Foreign Minister and European Community (EC) Council of Ministers President Leo Tindemans began talks with Jordanian leaders on Wednesday, reaffirming the EC's commitment to seeking common grounds for convening an international peace conference on the Middle East. During a meeting with Foreign Minister Taher Al Masi, Mr. Tindemans, who will also visit Egypt and Saudi Arabia, confirmed the community was "determined to continue moves towards convening the conference and fulfilling its entrusted role."

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein has undergone a successful minor operation in the right ear at a London hospital and is due to return to Amman in the coming few days. Prime Minister Zaid Rifai announced here Wednesday. Mr. Rifai said the King entered hospital last Sunday and left it after the operation the following day but he was awaiting doctors' advice about travelling by air which could expose him to air pressure that could affect the ears.

The prime minister was speaking upon returning to Amman from London following a visit to the United States for talks with Reagan administration officials. Mr. Rifai briefed the King in London on his talks in Washington and the attitude of the U.S. administration with regard to Jordan's call for an international peace conference on Middle East. Mr. Rifai described his talks in Washington as exploratory and said he conveyed the Arab stand reiterating that no settlement could be reached except through an international conference which should be called by the U.N. secretary-general and in which all concerned parties in the conflict and the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council should participate. "We have told the administration that this is not a tactical Arab stand but it represents the minimum acceptable level for moving ahead," Mr. Rifai said. Mr. Rifai said he felt there was a development in the U.S. stand with regard to the international conference idea, "which is no more rejected in Washington which began to see the importance of holding contacts with other members of the U.N. Security Council."

PLO factions seek compromise formula over ties with Egypt

From I. Amis K. Andoni in Algiers
PALESTINIAN factions were engaged on Wednesday in a flurry of negotiations to find a compromise formula to regulate the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) relations with Egypt as both Fatah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) — the two largest PLO groups — showed signs of flexibility in their stands over convening the Palestine National Council (PNC). On the third day of the Palestinian national dialogue, the PFLP took the initiative by presenting a comprehensive and thorough review of the faction's political stands against the PLO leadership since 1982. Abu Ali Mustafa, the PFLP's second-in-command, took the participants by surprise when he offered an extremely candid self-criticism of some of the group's political positions towards Fatah and PLO unity. But at the same time, he also clarified the PFLP's strategy and asked Fatah to make a similar candid reassessment of its political line since 1982. Although Mr. Mustafa, in his lengthy presentation, did not backtrack on the PFLP's demand that the PLO should sever all official contacts with Cairo as a precondition for the PFLP's attendance at the PNC, scheduled to be held here on April 20, Mr. Mustafa indicated that the PFLP was ready to explore various formulae which can regulate the PLO's relations with Cairo if there was an agreement on a solid basis for the PLO's political strategy and moves. According to well-informed sources, Mr. Mustafa's presentation, which was described as a turning point in the course of the Palestinian reconciliation dialogue, reflected the "progress" that was reached at a late hour on Tuesday during a meeting of the major Palestinian factions on the issue. The sources said that several formulae were discussed. No further details were available, but the sources said that a PNC resolution regarding relations with Cairo was expected to include a clear rejection of the Egyptian-Israeli Camp David agreement and related policies, but without calling for isolating Egypt. Other sources said that the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) and the Palestinian Communist Party, (Continued on page 4)

the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported. The agency said the talks touched on "all proposed concepts" and the Jordanian concept for an effective conference. Petra, said the Jordanian position was in support of the participation of all parties to the conflict including the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, received Mr. Tindemans later and reviewed with him the outcome of the latest efforts to remove obstacles in the way of convening the proposed conference. The Belgian minister was also received by Prime Minister Zaid (Continued on page 4)



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Wednesday meets with Belgian Foreign Minister Leo Tindemans and members of a delegation accompanying him (Petra photo)

Rifai returns; King awaiting doctors' advice on travel after minor surgery

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein has undergone a successful minor operation in the right ear at a London hospital and is due to return to Amman in the coming few days. Prime Minister Zaid Rifai announced here Wednesday. Mr. Rifai said the King entered hospital last Sunday and left it after the operation the following day but he was awaiting doctors' advice about travelling by air which could expose him to air pressure that could affect the ears.

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and for this reason it is no longer easy for any country now to ignore it, the prime minister said. The prime minister said King Hussein received in London a U.S. envoy who conveyed to him that the U.S. administration had embarked on initial contacts with the U.N. secretary-general as a prelude to consultations with the other members of the Security Council. The King also met with the Soviet ambassador to Britain and received a message from Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev on various subjects, the most important of which was the proposal for an international conference and Jordanian-Soviet coordination in this respect, the prime minister added. He said King Hussein also met with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to discuss the European role in the proposed conference. Returning with Mr. Rifai was Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief General Sharif Zaid Ibn Shaker. They were met at airport by Cabinet members and senior officials.

Arafat sees 'positive' signals from U.S.

HARARE (Agencies) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat said Wednesday the United States recently sent "positive signals" about a proposed international peace conference on the Middle East. Mr. Arafat told a news conference the United States had not decided to participate in a proposed United Nations General Assembly peace conference, but "in the last few days some positive statements have been made in Washington, the last one by (President Ronald) Reagan himself."

Mr. Arafat is in Harare for a meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement's nine-member committee on Palestine, which supports the proposed conference. He said he would return to Algeria to continue talks with PLO factions trying to strengthen their unity before a meeting of the Palestine National Council (PNC) on April 20. The council would discuss the international conference in detail, he said. Mr. Arafat refused to comment on reports from Algeria that the PLO has decided to abrogate the Feb. 11, 1985, agreement with Jordan. He said such a decision would be made democratically. Mr. Arafat said that most countries likely to be involved in the proposed peace talks, including the Soviet Union and China, had voiced their approval. "For the first time therefore there is a consensus to hold the conference. This will be the main topic at our meeting in Algiers next week," he said. Commenting on Syria's military intervention to halt fighting between Palestinian and opposing Amal militias in Lebanon, the PLO leader said the Syrians appeared to be giving security only to the Amal. "There is no security for Palestinian refugees, who are still under siege from Amal," he said.

Superpowers report progress on missile pact

MOSCOW (R) — The Soviet Union and the United States on Wednesday reported progress towards a treaty removing nuclear missiles from Europe but indicated they were still far apart on other major disarmament issues. Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze told reporters the two powers could with more work conclude an accord on medium-range rocketry — or intermediate nuclear forces (INF) — by the end of this year. And U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz told a news conference three days of talks with Mr. Shevardnadze and Kremlin leader Mikhail Gorbachev that the two sides had made "very considerable headway" on INF. But their optimistic assessments were tempered with warnings that serious differences remained on how to tackle the problem of strategic, or long-range, weaponry and U.S. President Ronald Reagan's strategic defence initiative (SDI). An official Soviet report on Mr. Shultz' meeting with the Kremlin chief accused Washington of pulling back from outline agreements on strategic forces reached at the Gorbachev-Reagan summit in Reykjavik last October. And although Mr. Shultz took an invitation to Mr. Gorbachev from Mr. Reagan to visit the U.S. for their third summit, the Soviet leader tied acceptance to completion of an INF accord and agreement on other "key principles" of disarmament. However, Moscow-based foreign analysts said the outcome of the talks was more positive than had seemed possible when Mr. Shultz left Washington last weekend in the middle of an espionage row between the two powers. Both sides had accused the other of extensive electronic surveillance of their respective embassies and Mr. Reagan had charged Moscow with overstepping the bounds in allegedly subverting U.S. Marine guards with beautiful female agents. Although Mr. Shultz said

Wednesday he had expressed "strong feelings" on the spying issue, no agreement on measures to be taken over the affair was reached with the Soviets and the affair was clearly relegated to the background of the talks. Mr. Shultz' meeting with Mr. Gorbachev on Tuesday was marked by a new packet of offers by the Kremlin chief which he said were aimed at breaking logjams on the INF question, SDI and an underground nuclear test ban. Since last Friday, when he told a meeting in Prague he was ready to link talks on short-range nuclear weapons in Europe to INF discussions, Mr. Gorbachev and his negotiators have twice improved their proposals in European rocketry. On Tuesday he told Mr. Shultz Moscow would be ready to write a clause into an INF agreement pledging to dismantle short-range missiles, with a radius of from 500 to 1,000 kilometres, within a specific and short time-frame. On Wednesday, as reported by

Mr. Shultz, Mr. Shevardnadze said the period envisaged was only one year. Mr. Gorbachev had also said he was prepared to liquidate all tactical battlefield weapons. The fast-moving Soviet diplomacy appeared aimed at keeping up the momentum towards and INF treaty following mounting expressions of concern in Western Europe that a medium-range accord would leave it open to Moscow's tactical missiles. Mr. Shultz declined to say how he assessed the Soviet proposals and told the news conference at the Foreign Ministry's press centre they would have to be discussed with Washington's North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) allies. The secretary of state flew from Moscow to Brussels Wednesday night to brief NATO on his talks. In the Soviet capital, First Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh briefed ambassadors of the East bloc's Warsaw Pact alliance.

Swiss move to help U.S. in arms-for-Iran probe

ZURICH (R) — Switzerland has rejected an appeal from five individuals and two firms seeking to prevent U.S. access to bank accounts linked to the arms-for-Iran scandal, the Justice Ministry said Wednesday.

Spokesman Joerg Kistler told Reuters from Bern that the federal police office had turned down the appeal to bar U.S. authorities from gaining information about the accounts.

The United States has asked for details of bank accounts in Switzerland held by about 20 Swiss, U.S., Iranian and Saudi Arabian individuals and firms.

The U.S. request was part of investigations into the alleged diversion of the proceeds of Iranian arms sales to anti-government Nicaraguan "contra" rebels via Swiss banks.

Kistler declined to name the seven individuals and firms, but he said former U.S. National Security Council aide Col. Oliver North was not among them.

The seven have until around mid-May to try one last appeal to Switzerland's highest court, the federal court in Lausanne. If their appeal there is rejected, the information will be released to the United States.

U.S. authorities asked Switzerland in mid-December to freeze accounts at the Geneva branch of Credit Suisse belonging to Col. North, Maj.-Gen. Richard

Secord, a retired air force officer, and Albert Hakim, an Iranian-born U.S. businessman.

The freeze was part of a bid for Swiss legal assistance, which, if granted, would allow the lifting of Switzerland's tough banking secrecy.

U.S. authorities extended their request in three subsequent stages in December and January. In some cases they merely asked for information and did not demand a freezing of accounts.

Swiss officials have not released a definitive list of the some 20 parties mentioned in the U.S. request.

However, Kistler confirmed that the companies included Geneva-based Compagnie De Service Fiduciaire, believed to have acted as an agent in the arms sales, and another firm based in Florida which is believed to have relayed funds to the contras.

Saudi Arabian arms dealer Adnan Kashoggi was also among those named in the U.S. request, a legal source said.

Meanwhile the U.S. Senate urged a sceptical judge Tuesday to order Gen. Secord to release foreign bank records believed

linked to the Iran-contra arms deals.

U.S. district judge Aubrey Robinson Jr. said he would rule in the case, but he called the order the Senate was seeking "a charade," said the Swiss might reject it and suggested whatever decision he makes will surely be appealed.

Senate Attorney Michael Davidson said the Tower Commission had identified Gen. Secord's "prominence in global arrangements with respect to shipment of arms to Iran."

The commission's report also said Gen. Secord was involved in a network supporting the Nicaraguan rebels known as contras. It said contributions appear to have been routed to the contras through a series of private organisations, some of them linked to Secord-controlled bank accounts by a chart found in the safe of Col. North.

The Senate Iran-contra Committee wants the records to learn about the flow of money through the Swiss bank accounts, Mr. Davidson said.

The Senate voted last month to seek a contempt of court citation that would threaten Gen. Secord with imprisonment if he did not sign documents giving investigators access to bank records in Switzerland, the Cayman Islands and Panama.

North reportedly got FBI report on contra-aid probe

WASHINGTON (AP) — National Security Council (NSC) aide Oliver North received an FBI investigative report last year on a criminal probe of alleged gunrunning to the Nicaraguan contras, a Justice Department spokesman said Tuesday.

The document was written by an FBI agent working in Miami, said federal law enforcement sources, speaking on condition they not be identified. It allowed Col. North to keep tabs on an investigation that potentially could have revealed his own possible role in assistance to the contras during a two-year congressional ban on U.S. military aid to the guerrilla force.

The sources said the document was found in Col. North's files at the NSC after the Iran-contra affair was uncovered last November, but spokesmen for the FBI and Justice Department declined to confirm that.

The sources said the document appears to have been supplied to Col. North through the FBI field office in Miami.

"It is my understanding that an FBI memo was routed to Col. North at some point earlier last year," said Justice Department spokesman Patrick Kortzen.

Mr. Kortzen added that Col. North "did not obtain it from either the main Justice Department or the FBI in Washington and would not normally have been given such material."

The fact that the FBI document was sent to Col. North was confirmed after Newsweek magazine reported that Col. North was routinely sent copies of FBI files about the contra network.

The gunrunning probe continues to be conducted by the office of U.S. attorney Leon Kellner in Miami, with FBI agents there assisting.

News reports have said Attorney General Edwin Meese slowed down the pace of the politically sensitive gunrunning investigation.



Soviet aide seeks to boost Moscow's image in Gulf

KUWAIT (R) — Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Petrovsky arrived in Kuwait Thursday on a Gulf tour expected to boost Moscow's growing profile in the area amid Arab disenchantment with Washington.

It comes amid signs the Gulf emirate favours a bigger superpower role in regional security, as fears persist of a spillover of the 6½-year-old Iran-Iraq war.

Until recently, Kuwait and other members of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have been wary of Soviet influence in the region.

Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — insisted the region would ensure its own security and stability.

Fearful of creating openings for foreign intervention, they repeatedly argued in favour of limiting superpower roles.

Diplomats say, however, there has been a clear shift in recent months after Tehran singled out ships trading with Kuwait for attack in the Gulf in retaliation for belligerent Kuwaiti financial and logistical support for Iraq in the war.

Kuwait, believed to reflect the views of the GCC, he declared security of the waterway, through which a tenth of the world's oil flows, an international responsibility.

"As such, we do not denounce the concern the big powers have demonstrated over what is happening in the Gulf waters and the efforts of these powers to ensure free navigation," Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah said recently.

After what diplomats said were months of talks with Moscow and Washington, Kuwait has agreed to charter three tankers from the Soviet Union in a move to protect its oil shipments.

A Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman said in Moscow Tuesday the tankers would enjoy naval protection if needed.

Washington offered a naval escort for Kuwaiti vessels but U.S. officials said this had been turned down, at least for the time being.

Diplomats said talks with the superpowers also covered the possibility of registering Kuwaiti vessels under U.S. and Soviet flags to make them formidable diplomatic targets in any attack.

"It seems they (Kuwait) are very eager to involve both the United States and the Soviet Union as much as possible," a senior Western diplomat said.

"If you go back not too long ago, the GCC's objective was that the security of the Gulf was a concern for the regional powers. But there is definitely a new attitude," he remarked.

Mr. Petrovsky, in the Soviet quest to widen ties in the Gulf, is expected to profit from Arab disillusionment over American arms sales to non-Arab Iran, Western and Arab diplomats said.

Kuwait opened diplomatic relations with Moscow in 1963, and for 22 years the only Gulf Arab state with Soviet ties. In 1985, the Kremlin formalised ties with Oman and the UAE.

Carter: Time is ripe for Mideast peace bid

WASHINGTON (R) — Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter has said there was an overwhelming consensus among Arab nations that the time was ripe for an international conference to bring peace to the Middle East.

He said Syria's conversion to the idea "was quite a new and exciting development to me" and called on the Reagan administration to take advantage of the opportunity.

"I think it would be a very popular political move for the Reagan administration to take in its last 20 months as the champion or proponent of peace in the Middle East," he said in an interview with Cable News Network (CNN).

"There is an all-encompassing consensus among Syria, Jordan and Egypt" for a new bid for peace, Mr. Carter said.

"My thought is that our nation would find this the appropriate time to press for Middle East peace under the umbrella of an international peace conference," he added.

"Many people in the Middle East are waiting for the United States to say it is time to move."

Mr. Carter said top officials, like Secretary of State George Shultz, whom he met after returning from a tour of the region earlier this month that included 10 hours of talks with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, had expressed "tremendous interest" in his views.

"But I didn't ask for or receive any specific commitment. That's a decision for President Reagan," he added.

The Reagan administration has been cautious on the idea of a conference, being promoted by Jordan, under the auspices of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council.

Americans doubt Reagan on Iran scandal — poll

WASHINGTON (R) — Less than a third of Americans believe President Reagan told the truth about the Iran-contra scandal, a New ABC News-Washington Post poll has said.

The poll also showed a majority of Americans — by a 60-to-34 per cent margin — believe the country is not generally moving in the right direction.

The survey was conducted among 1,509 adult Americans selected nationwide and interviewed on April 9-13. The margin of error is plus or minus three percentage points.

Forty-eight per cent gave Mr. Reagan a positive job approval rating, down two points from the

50 per cent he got three weeks ago after he gave a nationally televised news conference dominated by questions about the scandal.

Mr. Reagan's job rating remained in the 45-50 per cent range, where it fell when the scandal erupted in November 1986 over revelations that the United States secretly sold arms to Iran and that some of the sales profits were diverted to Nicaraguan rebels, known as contras, fighting the Managua government.

The poll showed 65 per cent of those surveyed doubted Mr. Reagan told the truth about the scandal.

Iran urges U.N. action against U.S. 'provocations'

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Iran has urged the U.N. secretary general to deal with what it called "provocative actions" by the United States in the Gulf region.

In a letter to the U.N. chief, Iranian representative Said Rajale Khorassani said the United States had heightened tension in the area by increasing its military presence under the guise of main-

taining freedom of navigation. He said Iran, which believed the U.S. military presence was aimed at supporting Iraq, would not be intimidated by such manoeuvres.

Iran, he added, would support any measure aimed at strengthening freedom of navigation in the Gulf and the peace and security of the region as a whole.

Libya marks anniversary of U.S. raids

LONDON (Agencies) — Libya has accused the United States of continued aggression on the first anniversary of U.S. air raids on Tripoli and Benghazi.

Libyan television, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), broadcast an account of a mass meeting lasting nearly four hours Tuesday night in the bombed former residence of Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi.

A Foreign Ministry statement issued on Libyan radio said the main purpose of the U.S. attack had been to assassinate Col. Qaddafi. It described the raid as an act of official state terrorism and accused the United States of continuing its aggression Wednesday.

American planes from the U.S. Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean and from bases in Britain bombed the Libyan cities of Tripoli and Benghazi on April 15 last year.

Col. Qaddafi's home in a Tripoli barracks was hit. His 16-month-old adopted daughter was reported killed and two sons were wounded.

Washington said the attacks were in retaliation for alleged Libyan complicity in the bombing of a West Berlin discotheque. Libya has denied involvement in international terrorism.

The Libyan statement said: "Despite its political and military defeat at the hands of the Libyan people... the United States is continuing its aggression by using

all military, political, media and economic means....

"What is now taking place in Chad and along our southern border is but an extension and continuation of the flagrant aggression against the Libyan people."

Chadian forces have recently driven Libyan troops backing rebels fighting the N'Djamena government from northern Chad.

French Cooperation Minister Michel Aurillac said on Monday the Chadian army was making constant incursions into the Aouzou Strip, a disputed area believed rich in minerals on the Chad-Libya border. Libya has said sovereignty over the strip is not negotiable.

TV & RADIO

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel: 77311-19

PROGRAMME ONE

15:30 Koran
15:35 Programme Review
15:40 Cartoons
15:50 Don Knotts Show
15:55 French Teaching programme
16:00 Local series
16:10 News reports (local)
16:20 19:00 Programme Review and varieties
16:30 News in Arabic
16:40 Arabic series
16:50 Tomorrow's programme
17:00 Arabic film
17:10 News Summary in Arabic
17:20 Film continued

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 Le grand échiquier
17:40 News in French
17:50 Le monde selon George
18:00 News in Hebrew
18:10 World Sports
18:20 News in Arabic
18:30 Me and My Girl (Comedy)
18:40 The Last Frontier (drama)
18:50 News in English
19:00 Feature film: "Papillon"

RADIO JORDAN
855 KHz. AM & 99 MHz. FM
& partly on 95.0 KHz. SW
Tel: 77411-19

07:00 Light Music
07:30 Newsweek
08:00 Morning Show
08:30 News Summary
09:00 Morning Show Contd.
10:00 Country Music
11:00 "Hissville: The story of Motown"
12:00 News Summary
12:30 Readings
13:00 News Summary
13:30 Pop Session
14:00 News Bulletin
14:30 Instrumentals
15:00 30-minute Theatre
15:30 Concert Hour
16:00 News Summary
16:30 Instrumentals
17:00 Discovering Music
17:30 Old Favourites
18:00 Pop Session
18:30 News Summary
19:00 Special Feature
19:30 Music
20:00 Newsweek
20:30 Date with a Star
21:00 Evening Show
21:30 News Summary
21:45 Evening Show Contd.

WHAT'S GOING ON

TODAY'S EVENTS

EXHIBITIONS

* Art exhibition by Jordanian artist Carol Younis, at Alia Art Gallery runs through April 16.

* An art exhibition by Mohammed Atiqat, at the Spanish Cultural Centre, Amman (until April 18).

* An art exhibition by Dutch artist Hugo de Rooze at the Petra Art Gallery.

* Ceramics exhibition by Jim Mason at the British Council (until April 16).

* An art exhibition entitled Byzantines and Byzantium during the early beginning of Islam: Khirbat Es-Samra and Es-Fodein at the French Cultural Centre (until April 23).

CONCERTS

* Two concerts by the Boogie Jam at 6:30 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. Thursday at the New York, New York Restaurant in Shuqbat.

FEATURE FILM

* "A Star is Born" at 7:00 p.m. Thursday at the American Centre.

CULTURAL CENTRES

Royal Cultural Centre - Tel. 66102/7
American Centre - Tel. 64711
British Council - Tel. 6361478
French Cultural Centre - Tel. 637009
German Institute - Tel. 64193
Soviet Cultural Centre - Tel. 624049
Turkish Cultural Centre - Tel. 639777
Haya Arts Centre - Tel. 6671016
Y.W.C.A. - Tel. 641793
Y.W.M.C.A. - Tel. 664251
Amman Municipal Library - Tel. 636111
Univ. of Jordan Library - Tel. 843555

MUSEUMS

"Children's Heritage and Science Museum," Fun and knowledge for all ages, plus a small planetarium at the Haya Arts Centre. Open all week 9:00

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08) 53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

ROYAL JORDANIAN FLIGHTS
(Terminal 1)

10:00 Agaba (RJ)
10:20 Cairo (RJ)
10:40 Jeddah (RJ)
11:00 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
11:20 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
11:40 Dhahran, Kuwait (RJ)
11:50 Athens, Larissa (RJ)
12:00 Cairo, Agaba (RJ)
12:15 New York, Vienna (RJ)
12:30 Bucharest (RJ)
12:45 Athens, Larissa (RJ)
12:50 Rome (RJ)
13:00 Baghdad (RJ)

OTHER FLIGHTS (Terminal 2)

12:45 Kuwait (LH)
13:40 Doha, Bahrain (GF)
14:30 Kuwait (KU)
15:30 Istanbul, Ankara (TK)
16:40 Riyadh (SV)
17:30 Baghdad (LH)
18:10 Amsterdam, Frankfurt (LH)
19:00 Zurich, Larissa (SR)
20:35 Cairo (MS)

DEPARTURES

ROYAL JORDANIAN FLIGHTS
(Terminal 1)

07:45 Agaba (RJ)
08:00 Rome (RJ)
08:20 Larissa, Baghdad (RJ)
08:40 Cairo (RJ)
09:00 Athens (RJ)
09:20 Frankfurt, London (RJ)
09:40 Brussels, Paris (RJ)
10:00 Kuwait, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:20 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
10:40 Jeddah (RJ)
11:00 Kuala Lumpur, Singapore (RJ)
11:20 Baghdad (RJ)
11:40 Cairo (RJ)
12:00 Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
12:15 Bangkok (RJ)

OTHER FLIGHTS (Terminal 2)

06:20 Frankfurt (LH)
06:40 Cairo, London (BA)

USEFUL TELEPHONE NOS.

EMERGENCIES

Amman governorate 891228
Amman Civil Defence 198, 199
Civil Defence Unit 271293, 273131
Civil Defence Overheads 707033
Civil Defence Deir Alla 84706
Ambulance 193, 775111
Amman downtown fire brigade 198
First aid 630421
Blood Bank 778393
Civil Defence rescue 661111
Fire headquarters 62290-3
Police rescue 192, 621111, 63777
Police headquarters 639141
Traffic police 8963091
Electric Power Co. 624412
Municipal water complaints 771258
Queen Alia Int. Airport (08)533040

HOSPITALS

Husseini Medical Centre 813813/2
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn. 642316
Al-Balqa Maternity, J. Amn. 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity 62362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shamsani 6641714
Simatani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 771013
Al-Musader Hospital 6672279
The Islamic, Abdali 66612757
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646
Italian, Al-Mohajerat 771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 7751126
Army, Marka 89161175
Queen Alia Hospital 60224050
Amal Hospital 674155

GENERAL

Jordan Television 77311/19

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple (Lebanese & Turkish) 310 / 270
Apple (French) 380 / 340
Banana 320 / 270
Banana (Mukammal) 270 / 220
Beans (local) 260 / 200
Broad beans 100 / 70
Broccoli 140 / 100
Cabbage 100 / 70
Carrot (yellow) 100 / 70
Cauliflower 140 / 100
Cucumbers 160 / 100
Eggplant (large) 130 / 80
Garlic (green) 300 / 220
Grapefruit 150 / 100

Lemon 160 / 120
Mallow 350 / 300
Mint 180 / 140
Onion (dry) 210 / 150
Onion (green) 180 / 140
Orange 150 / 120
Orange (Shamouni) 240 / 180
Peas 260 / 200
Pepper (hot) 320 / 280
Pepper (sweet) 230 / 180
Potato 150 / 100
Raddish 110 / 80
Spinach 140 / 100
Tomatoes 110 / 70
Turnip 100 / 70

FOR FRIDAY

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel: 77311-19

PROGRAMME ONE

10:00 Koran
10:30 Programme Review
10:40 Cartoons and children programme
11:00 The Little
11:30 Friday's Prayer and religious programme

13:30 Sport Magazine
14:30 Religious Seminar
15:30 Arabic Series
16:40 Arabic Series
18:00 Viewer's choice (Arabic)
19:30 News Programme
20:00 Programme Review
20:30 A programme on the West Bank
21:00 Arabic Series

22:00 Studio '86 (Arabic)
23:00 News Summary in Arabic

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 French film
19:00 News in French
19:15 Ajourdain en France
19:30 News in Hebrew
19:45 History of Medicine
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 The Cosby show
21:00 Weekly Preview
21:10 Falcon Crest
22:00 News in English
22:30 Play of the Week

RADIO JORDAN
855 KHz. AM & 99 MHz. FM
& partly on 95.0 KHz. SW
Tel: 77411-19

07:00 Light Music
07:30 Newsweek
08:00 Morning Show

14:15 In the Mezzanine 14:25 A Letter from Northern Ireland 14:30 Meridian 14:40 Radio Newsworld 15:15 Jazz for the Asking 15:45 Sports Roundup 16:00 World News 16:30 John Peel 17:00 Outlook; News Summary 17:45 Nature Notebook 18:00 Radio Newsworld 18:15 The European Community 19:00 World News 19:45 Commentary 19:45 Good Friday Meditation 19:48 The World Today 20:00 World News 20:09 A Letter from Northern Ireland 20:15 The Great Balloons 20:45 Sports Roundup 21:00 Newsweek 21:30 Multitask 3

22:00 News Summary; Outlook 22:30 Outlook (cont'd.) 22:45 Society Today 23:00 World News 23:09 24 Hours; News Summary 23:30 Science in Action 24:00 News Summary; Network UK 00:15 Music Now 00:45 A Night to Remember 01:00 World News 01:09 The World Today 01:25 A Letter from Northern Ireland 01:30 Through My Window 01:40 Reflections 01:45

11:00 Kuwait, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
11:20 London, Frankfurt (RJ)
11:40 Istanbul (RJ)
11:50 London, Paris (RJ)
12:00 Bangkok (RJ)
12:10 Dhahran, Kuwait (RJ)
12:20 Riyadh (RJ)
12:30 Cairo (RJ)
12:40 Dubai, Karachi (RJ)
12:50 Bahrain, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
13:00 Kuwait, Dhahran (RJ)
13:10 Sana'a (RJ)
13:20 Cairo (RJ)
13:30 Damascus (RJ)

OTHER FLIGHTS (Terminal 2)

08:35 Cairo (MS)
10:20 Sana'a (LH)
12:30 Jeddah (SV)
13:50 Rio de Janeiro, Lisbon (LA)
14:35 Muscat, Doha (GF)
14:45 Kuwait (KU)
15:00 Dhahran (RJ)
17:45 Athens (OA)
21:00 Frankfurt (LH)
01:45 London, Cairo (BA)

DEPARTURES

ROYAL JORDANIAN FLIGHTS
(Terminal 1)

07:45 Agaba (RJ)
08:00 Cairo (RJ)
08:20 Jeddah (RJ)
08:40 Dhahran, Kuwait (RJ)
09:00 Athens (RJ)

Afro-Asian Rural Reconstruction Organisation opens regional office

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Youssef Hamdan Al Jaber Wednesday opened a regional office for the Afro-Asian Rural Reconstruction Organisation (AARRO) in Amman.

In a speech on the occasion, the minister said that developing rural regions remains one of the basic elements for building comprehensive development in any country and therefore any cooperation among countries at the regional and international levels is bound to achieve the aspirations of peoples around the world.

An agreement between the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the AARRO Secretary General Jinjo Pandhi was signed here in September to open a regional office for the AARRO in Amman. The office is one of four

regional offices the AARRO decided to set up in Asia and Africa during its last conference held in Seoul, South Korea, last April.

In his address, the minister said that Jordan has been fully cooperative with United Nations organisations and responded favourably to AARRO's request to open the regional office in Amman. Jordan is now making preparations for hosting the organisation's 9th meeting in Amman on April 21, the minister continued.

This conference will focus attention on issues related to the development of rural regions in Asia and Africa, the minister explained in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Wide range of programmes

Mr. Jaber added that the re-

gional office will handle activities in rural regions of the Middle East and help national governments deal with the problems of hunger, thirst, poverty and disease. The organisation will also help with eradicating illiteracy in addition to exchanging information and expertise in rural development affairs, he continued.

The opening ceremony was attended by heads of diplomatic missions of countries participating in the organisation's activities and several senior Jordanian officials.

The AARRO, which was founded after the Second World War, is aimed at developing understanding and cooperation among member nations, especially in rural regions, and helping member states to acquire financial assistance for rural development programmes.

No plans to include private sector in ministry's health insurance scheme — Hamzeh

By Abdullah Nsour
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Health Ministry has not made any plans to include private sector employees in its health insurance scheme, and does not contemplate deducting any fees from these employees' salaries in return for health services, Minister of Health Zaid Hamzeh said Wednesday.

Addressing a press conference, the minister said that neither the Health Ministry nor the Higher Health Council can serve as a substitute for the work of private companies with regard to health insurance matters but added that they both try to help provide health services for workers in these companies and organisations.

A number of organisations have expressed some reservations about the ministry's health insurance scheme to cover employees in the private sector after initially reading the financial terms of the scheme, he continued, pointing out that these terms later proved to be inaccurate. Inaccuracies occurring in a study for the inclu-

sion of non-government employees in the scheme are being removed, the minister said.

Dr. Hamzeh said that the Ministry of Health will shortly set up a board of directors for the health insurance fund and that this board would comprise representatives of the private sector, the Federation of Jordanian Labour Unions, the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce, industrial concerns and businesses as well as the Health Ministry and medical associations.

The ministry aims to apply a unified insurance system for all sectors with the hope of ensuring comprehensive health insurance for all members of the public taking into consideration the existing health insurance scheme for civil servants and the armed forces, Dr. Hamzeh added.

The minister announced that an enlarged meeting will be held towards the end of April to discuss this subject and be stressed that no decision would be taken on the issue unless all parties agreed.

Muasher assures private sector of continuing support

ZARQA (Petra) — Minister of Industry and Trade Rajai Muasher Wednesday said that the commercial sector in Jordan constitutes one of the pillars of the national economy and in view of its importance the government will continue to support this sector to enable it to shoulder its tasks and responsibilities.

Addressing a meeting attended by heads of Jordanian chambers of commerce and the executive committee of the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce (FJCC), Dr. Muasher said that his ministry will study any project submitted by the commercial sector which aims at serving the public interest.

Dr. Muasher referred to the economic situation in Jordan and said that the national economy is now facing two major problems which he listed as unemployment in view of the increasing number of graduates who find no jobs and a drop in financial assistance from Arab states. He also said that the situation had been aggravated by a decrease in Jordanian exports and a drop in money transfers

from Jordanian expatriates. The government has adopted several measures for dealing with the present economic situation one of which is increasing customs duty on imported goods for the sake of supporting local production and also saving foreign currency, the minister said.

He said that these measures have resulted in boosting the role of the private sector and national exports. Dr. Muasher called on the chambers of commerce to coordinate their work with one another, especially with those in charge of industry, and he urged them to form FJCC committees and work closely with the government on all matters related to industry and trade.

At the outset of the meeting, Mr. Hamdi Al Tabbaa, the FJCC's president, said that the private sector realises the economic circumstances through which Jordan is passing following the periods of recession, and economic boom and the private sector appreciates the government's measures to handle the situation.

Haj Hassan chairs Arab social affairs talks in Tunis

TUNIS (Petra) — Meetings of the executive bureau of the Council of Arab Social Development Ministers began in Tunis on Wednesday under the chairmanship of Minister of Labour and Social Development Khaled Al Haj Hassan and with the participation of delegates from seven Arab states.

In his speech at the opening of the meeting, Mr. Haj Hassan expressed his hope that the meeting would give momentum to joint Arab action and be reiterated Jordan's keenness on developing joint Arab action to achieve the interests of all Arab citizens.

The minister told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, correspondent in Tunis that the executive bureau reviewed the topics on its agenda and approved the allocation of \$600,000 as financial support to 11 social development projects submitted by 11 Arab countries.

Traditional industries

The council also agreed to sup-

port a Jordanian project for the development of traditional industries and handicrafts since this scheme is aimed at securing a source of individual and national income, Mr. Haj Hassan continued. He added that the bureau also appreciated the recent establishment of the Arab Council for Child Development and recommended that the Council of Arab Social Development Ministers support this new establishment which will provide its services and care to about 40 per cent of the children in the Arab World.

Discussing the Jordanian project to develop traditional handicrafts, Mr. Haj Hassan pointed out that his ministry has taken a number of measures to implement this project and has allocated a building in Amman to house the programme and to serve as a centre where all traditional industries and handicrafts in the country could be gathered and marketed.

The meeting is being attended by delegates from Jordan, Tunisia, Oman, Iraq, Somalia, North Yemen and Palestine.

Regent receives Syrian minister

Visiting interior minister, Dajani tour PSD and attend graduation ceremony for police officers

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Wednesday received at the Royal Court Syrian Interior Minister Mohammad Ghabash who is currently on a visit to Jordan.

During the meeting, they reviewed the close bilateral relationship with all Arab countries and always seeks to enhance solidarity among Arab states, but the relations between Jordan and Syria are unique in view of the geographic location and their close family and social ties, Lt. Majali added. Both countries, he said, have launched close cooperation in numerous fields, including police work and security, and this is a source of pride for both sides.

Lt.-Gen. Majali paid tribute to the police training school and its staff for their efforts in turning

people. Jordan has a deep-rooted relationship with all Arab countries and always seeks to enhance solidarity among Arab states, but the relations between Jordan and Syria are unique in view of the geographic location and their close family and social ties, Lt. Majali added. Both countries, he said, have launched close cooperation in numerous fields, including police work and security, and this is a source of pride for both sides.

Lt.-Gen. Majali paid tribute to the police training school and its staff for their efforts in turning

out, well-trained and qualified men to safeguard the Kingdom's security and he urged the new graduates to put into practice the skills they acquired during their training course.

At the outset of the ceremony, Brig. Nimer Humud, the school's director, made a speech outlining the training programmes and said that the 148 graduates have been lectured on police work and trained in the use of different types of light weapons. The graduates paraded before the audience and then received their diplomas and awards from the PSD director.

Later on Wednesday Mr. Rifai received Syrian Interior Minister Mohammad Ghabash. The meeting was attended by Interior Minister Rajai Dajani and Syrian Ambassador in Amman Majid Abu Saleh.

Fayez, Zinchuk discuss IPU conference agenda

AMMAN (Petra) — Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Akef Al Fayez Wednesday received Soviet Ambassador in Amman Alexander Zinchuk. Mr. Fayez, who is also the president of the Arab Parliamentary Union (APU), discussed with the Soviet ambassador the topics on the agenda of the International Parliamentary Union's (IPU) 77th conference which will be held in Nicaragua later this month.

They also discussed coordination between the stands of Arab parliamentary delegations and those of the Soviet Union on major political topics of common concern to be discussed during

the conference, foremost of which are the international peace and security and the situation in the Middle East.

Mr. Zinchuk conveyed to Mr. Fayez the thanks and gratitude of a Supreme Soviet delegation which recently visited Jordan for the care and interest accorded to them during their visit. Such visits, Mr. Zinchuk added, help boost existing relations between Jordanian and Soviet parliamentarians to achieve the interests of the peoples of the two countries and are also bound to contribute towards achieving a just and durable peace in the region.

Newly established centre holds seminar on hearing and speech disorders

By Najwa Najjar
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A one-day seminar on "Phoniatrics and Logopedics" was held Wednesday at the University of Jordan to shed new light on issues related to the field of hearing and speech disorders. A Swiss team was invited by the phonetics research centre to participate in discussions on problems which arise in this field.

In an opening speech, Dr. Youssef Al Hales, head of the centre at the University of Jordan, said the centre was established a year ago with the aims of conducting research on Arabic phonetics and applying the results of the research in a practical way. "The centre is still in its formative stage, however, it pleases me to say that there are a number of graduate students carrying out scientific research on speech defects," said Dr. Hales, who is also a professor of English language and phonetics. He added that the door of the centre is open for all who want to conduct research.

Cooperation

Dr. Hales went on to say that the centre is determined to continue its cooperation with visiting medical teams and any other Arab or international medical institution which extends a helping hand.

Dr. Hales told the Jordan Times that the centre presently collaborates with phonetic centres at London University, McGill University in Canada, the Royal Institute of Technology in Sweden, and the speech disorder unit in Ain Shampes University in Cairo.

All institutes in the Kingdom which cater for the deaf and dumb such as the Queen Alia Institute for the Deaf and the King Hussein Medical Centre among others, benefit from the centre, he said. A two-month course for instructors on teaching Arabic phonetics at various institutions has recently begun, Dr. Hales continued.

In addition, many of the instructors attended the seminar which tackled topics such as: voice disorders and treatment; modern techniques in speech analysis; hearing screening and testing; pendred and mobius syndromes in Jordan; speech delay and hearing; teaching the deaf; an informative and psychological approach to facilitate communication for those with severe speech handicaps.

Most of the topics will be presented by members of the Swiss medical team invited by the centre. The team is headed by Dr. A. Muller, the president of the International Association of Phonetics and Logopedics. Dr. N. Kotby from the speech disorder unit in Cairo will also deliver a lecture.

Survey on schoolchildren

The team, in cooperation with the centre and the Ministry of Education, has begun a survey on speech and hearing defects among Jordanian schoolchildren. Students suffering from hearing and speech impediments throughout the Kingdom were asked by the Ministry of Education to fill out forms and to gather on a specific date to be seen by the newly-formed team.

On Monday the team visited the Queen Alia Centre for the Deaf and the King Hussein Medical

Centre, and on Tuesday schoolchildren in Irbid were seen. Schools in Karak, Aqaba, the Jordan Valley and Amman will be visited over the weekend and on Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

According to Dr. Hales "no exact number of children and adults afflicted with these disorders has been recorded. However, if we take Irbid as an example, there is a very large number." He explained that they expected only 20 students to appear, "but, close to 700 were waiting for us." Dr. Hales noted that pre-school children and adults were not included in this survey. "We have a big problem which needs a national campaign to draw peoples' attention to it," he said.

Participants in this seminar hope that it will create some awareness about the problem in addition to benefiting from specialists' research. A masters student working at the centre, Thiab Ajlouni, said that the disorders arise from accidents, diseases, congenital reasons and environment. Elaborating on the last cause, Mr. Ajlouni said: "Many times during a child's development parents, who are often uneducated, do not encourage a child to express his thoughts, and speech depends on thought." He added that many parents do not realise that their child has an impediment nor that something can be done about it and therefore, with time, the disorder becomes progressively worse.

Dr. Mahmoud Al Samra, vice president of the University of Jordan, and Dr. Muller also delivered short speeches at the opening of the seminar.

Guest lecturers present in-depth papers to Third pan-Arab Congress on Psychiatry

By Salva Al Taher
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Third Pan-Arab Congress on Psychiatry continued its discussions on Wednesday and reviewed several working papers tackling the use of drugs in the treatment of mental diseases, factors affecting amnesia following head injuries and other subjects.

The participants, representing 18 different countries, also discussed research work on AIDS and latest developments in the diagnosis and psychological treatment of persons suffering from the killer disease, and the relationship between psychiatry and internal medicine.

Highlights of the plenary session on Tuesday included a long overdue expose by Dr. Ali Kamal from Iraq on the Arab contribution to psychological medicine. The west has methodically ignored the influence of the Arabs on psychology and psychiatry over the years, said Dr. Kamal. Yet, the Arabs were pioneers in psychotherapy and psychoanalysis. They were known to have used ab-reactive therapy, cognitive and supportive therapy and also discovered and coined self-analysis, free association, interpretation of dreams and classification, he pointed out. They also built the first psychiatric hospitals in Aleppo and Baghdad as early as 707 A.D.

Dr. Mohammad Said Kamal, followed with a paper on "Psychiatry in Jordan Past, Present and Future."

"In any discussion about psychiatric services in Jordan during the last 50 years, one is confronted with unusual political and sociological conditions. Those mostly relate to the Palestinian problem, namely the pre-1948 Palestine, the evolution of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the eventual occupation of the whole of Palestine by the Israelis in 1967," the paper

said, adding that this would account for the unusual ups and downs in the development of mental health services in Jordan.

In his paper, Dr. Kamal stated: "Over the years, in Jordan and in other developing countries, psychiatry has been suffering. It does not have the glamour of other specialties and it has been involved with insanity, traditionally rather than disease, stigmatised and hidden, and associated with superstitions.

He also said that the early treatment, prevention of chronicity, preventive measures and community centres with a strenuous rehabilitation direction could liberate the psychologically affected from becoming a permanent liability to society.

Dr. Kamal, who is director of the government mental hospital in Bethlehem, put forward some suggestions to the congress in-

cluding a recommendation that mental health be dealt with as an integral part of the health delivery system of the country and not an isolated system and that it has its fair share of the budget and planning in conjunction with other services.

Dr. Kamal suggested that psychiatric in-patient and out-patient services should gradually be expanded to be part of the general hospital and primary care services in the country with hospital units only needed in central, regional hospitals for short period hospitalisation, crisis intervention and some emergencies. He said that the out patient services should fit smoothly within the framework of the other primary care services and should be staffed by specialists or trained physicians supported by a team of social workers, community health workers, and nurses.

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Adding fuel to fire

THE U.S. has put on alert a large flotilla of warships in the immediate vicinity of the Strait of Hormuz in order to deter Iran from using Silkworm anti-ship missiles stationed near the mouth of the Gulf against international shipping. At the same time, a well-orchestrated U.S. propaganda is in place, aimed at inducing the Gulf littoral states and the shipping companies to seek protection for their cargo ships by accepting to have them planted with U.S. flags while plying to and fro in the Gulf or have them escorted by U.S. warships.

The U.S. military posture around the Gulf immediately evokes a number of questions. In what way does this military venture intend to influence the course of the ongoing war in the direction of resolving it? What happens if Iran were to actually use the Silkworm missiles against international shipping? Will the U.S. retaliate by totally destroying all such missiles deployed by Iran along the periphery of the Strait of Hormuz? Or is the military posturing merely a ploy, designed to escalate the war with the ultimate aim of bringing the domestic and foreign policies of the Gulf states directly under U.S. influence?

Apart from these imponderables, it is also likely that in this context the U.S. may come up against two other ticklish predicaments. First, in the past, Iraq's military operations have incapacitated more tankers in the Gulf than Iran has done. In the future too, the possibility of more Iran-bound tankers coming under fire from Iraqi Exocet missiles cannot be ruled out. And French Exocets are reputed to be deadlier than the Chinese Silkworm missiles. What, if by a quirk of events, Iran were to ask the U.S. for protection of its tankers from Exocets? How would, in that event, the U.S. try to reconcile the contradiction inherent in having to protect the interests of opposing antagonists? Second, Iran's U.N. representative last week said in no uncertain terms that if Iran were to search a vessel in the Gulf, definitely it would continue with that whether it carries an American flag or any other flag. Further, he warned that the Americans should be more preoccupied with protecting themselves than protecting others. This is a very serious challenge for the U.S. to ponder before it embarks on any premeditated adventure. Muscle-flexing may not help in dissipating the Iranian resolve to resist what they consider to be U.S. imperialism.

The U.S. has all through maintained a negative approach in the Gulf war, indicating a preference to see neither side emerge as a winner or a loser. This appeared firstly to have acted as a causal factor, allowing the Iranian regime to insist on certain quixotic demands as conditions for agreeing to a negotiated settlement; and secondly, it helped prolong the war, providing ample opportunities for the arms industries in the U.S. to make immense profits by way of selling arms to Iran. The current flurry and potential U.S. military involvement in the Gulf, to protect international shipping, is a corollary to that negative approach to the Gulf war. It seems simply an improvisation on behalf of the oil barons of the West who are losing huge profits as a result of the tanker war rather than an exercise motivated by a genuine interest in helping the Gulf states. Such military improvisations are strategically weak and would only help in adding fuel to the fire. But again when has the world ever seen the U.S. really engaged in extinguishing a battle-fire, started by intent or accident in the developing world?

ARABIC PRESS EDITORIALS

Al Ra'i: American commitment

WHILE the Israeli soldiers are busily killing Arab people in the occupied Arab regions and the Israeli authorities continuing repressive measures against the innocent civilians under their rule, U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz was holding a banquet in Moscow and telling the Soviet Jews to do all they can to emigrate to Israel. Shultz said that the United States was not forgetting them and that they will be helped to fulfil their dreams in emigrating to Israel. Thus the U.S. secretary of state put the Palestinian people behind his back and is now concerned about the emigration of Soviet Jews to the occupied Palestine to take the place of the indigenous Arab population. Shultz claims he is concerned about the rights of the Jews in the Soviet Union and he is doing all he can to deprive the Palestinians from their basic rights and helping Jews to take their place, their homes and land. Shultz promised the Soviet Jews prayers for their salvation and for God to enable them to evict the Palestinian people from their land and take their home from them. We never heard about any one praying that the murderer be helped to kill or commit crimes and steal. Shultz does not pray for the Palestinian people to regain rights in their homeland nor does he show any concern about Israeli atrocities against the people of the occupied Arab land and about the destruction the Zionists are causing and the crimes they are committing.

Al Dustour: EC takes another step

BELGIAN Foreign Minister Leo Tindemans has started a visit to Jordan and we consider such visit as a constructive step in the right direction. He represents the European Economic Community in talks with governments of the Middle East region and is carrying out a new effort to help re-establish peace. His visit comes in the wake of a declaration issued by the European Community in Brussels, endorsing the idea of an international peace conference to be held under the auspices of the United Nations. It also follows close on the heels of a tour made by King Hussein to European capitals and a visit to Washington by Prime Minister Zaid Rifai and Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri. The visits and the tours were all aimed at gathering momentum for convening an international peace conference and implementing U.N. resolutions. Tindemans' tour will no doubt enable him to have a close-hand study of the situation and urge him and the European Community to speed up action for bolder the proposed conference.

Sawt Al Shaab: Crying for help

FOR three successive days and nights the Israeli soldiers carried out atrocities against the Arab population in the occupied Arab West Bank. Their actions were of course in support of Zionist settlers who went on the rampage in Qalqilya to avenge themselves on the Arabs for the killing of a woman a day earlier. The present siege, imposed on Arab towns and villages and the continued acts of barbarism and repression being committed against the Arab population, have prompted the Arabs to enhance their resistance and struggle. But the suffering of the Arab people under Israeli rule prompts us to think out ways for extending assistance to them and also bolsters our determination to seek an international conference for the sake of rescuing our Arab kinsmen and ending the Israeli occupation. For three days and nights the Arab people in the occupied territories have been resisting enemy repression and atrocities and have been crying out for freedom. They have offered sacrifice and suffered numerous tragedies for the sake of maintaining their hold on their homeland.

Deportation of Palestinians under subversion act is challenged

The following report by Nicholas C. McBride, under the same headline, appeared in the Christian Science Monitor of April 9.

WASHINGTON — The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) last week filed a lawsuit in the federal district court in Los Angeles challenging the use of a McCarthy-era law to deport seven Palestinians accused of being associated with a subversive organization.

The lawsuit relates to the Jan. 26 arrest of seven Palestinians in Los Angeles by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), and the Los Angeles police department. The Palestinians were accused of distributing literature of an organization that "advocates world communism," in violation of the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act. On Feb. 17 immigration-law Judge Roy J. Daniels ordered them released from INS custody until their deportation hearing on April 28.

In its suit, in which Arab-American and other civil liberties groups have joined, the ACLU asserts that the Palestinians are being persecuted for activities protected by the First Amendment. ACLU attorney Hope Nakamura says supreme court rulings since the 1980s have distinguished between "advocacy of belief and advocacy of action." She says the act has rarely been used and the "current whipped-up frenzy against Arabs and Palestinians," aggravated by violence in the Middle East, has set the scene for constitutional violations in the name of national security.

Rep. Barney Frank (D) of Massachusetts in February introduced a bill that would, among other things, repeal the "ideological exclusions" provisions of the McCarran-Walter Act, including those the Palestinians are accused of breaking. The bill would not affect

the provisions that allow the U.S. to exclude terrorists.

In briefs filed in court, the Justice Department charges the Palestinians with being involved in activities on behalf of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), purportedly a Marxist-Leninist organization advocating violent overthrow of the United States and other governments.

"The PFLP operates both overt and covert missions in the United States to carry out its goals," the brief says. "The PFLP's purposes are accomplished through the use of illegal and violent means, bombings, shootings and hijackings. These purposes are also accomplished by the PFLP's publishing and distributing literature promoting communism."

The defendants deny being affiliated with the group.

INS spokesman Duke Austin says, "we don't have to wait until somebody blows up a bus or a plane before we deport them. We're not suggesting they be put in jail — we're suggesting they go home." He says INS has evidence that the Palestinians' departure would be in the "best interests of the U.S."

FBI spokeswoman Susan Shnitser says the bureau conducted an investigation of the defendants but found "no evidence of federal violations we had jurisdiction over."

As a result, she says, the FBI turned over information "we thought would be helpful to INS." She says the information will not be made public until the April 28 hearing.

ACLU attorneys say the proceedings against the Palestinians are an extension of a government contingency plan prepared in May 1986 and discussed at an interagency meeting in September.

The plan reportedly calls for use of the McCarran-Walter Act to expel foreign nationals, explicitly says to "routinely hold any alien so charged without bond," and designates representatives from INS, FBI, the U.S. Customs Service, and the Central Intelligence

Agency, who are responsible for executing the plan. The plan also speaks of a "target group" of 10,000 aliens and specifically gives numbers of people from Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, Iran, Jordan, Syria, Morocco, and Lebanon who have overstayed visas.

"That never was endorsed, that was a talking paper, an option," says INS spokesman Austin of the plan. "We categorically deny any such plan to round up (Arab aliens). These are things suggested to talk about at irregular meetings of an ad hoc committee."

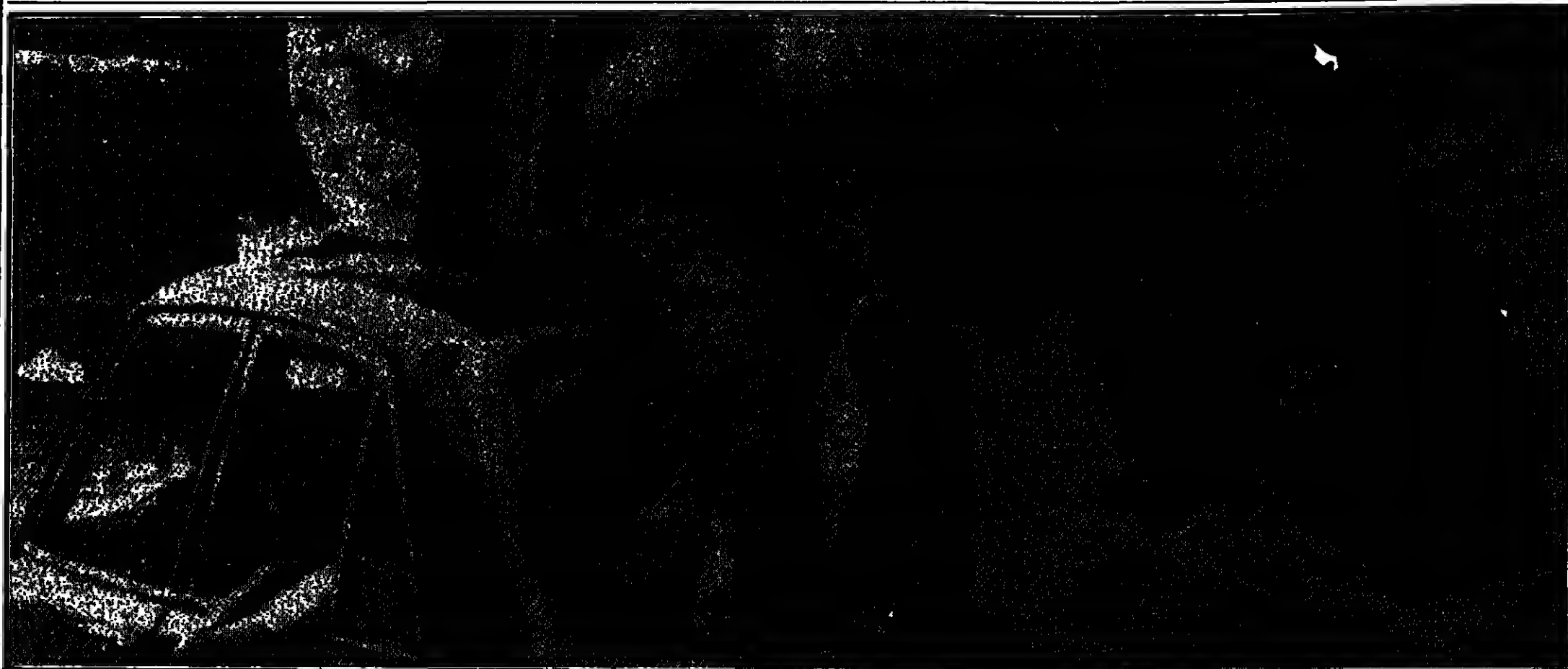
"Ethnic origin has never been an issue. These individuals will have their day in court," says Oliver (Buck) Revell, the FBI's executive assistant director for investigations. He asserts that the Justice Department, INS, and FBI have no interest "whatsoever in denying any individuals their constitutionally protected rights to engage in political dissent."

He adds, "we will, however, investigate when we have a basis to do so. And that, we have done, with the Jewish groups, Irish groups, Armenian groups, and we will do it with Arab and Palestinian groups where we have a basis to do so, but it will be done within the law."

Dan Stormer, the chief counsel defending the Palestinians, says, "It is not insignificant that on Jan. 24 more hostages were taken in the Middle East. Merely two days later my clients were arrested and taken to jail. This is Arab-bashing, this is prejudice."

Paul Hoffman, another lawyer for the defendants, says "the Palestinian community in this country is in constant debate over what's going on in the Middle East. The (Palestine Liberation Organisation) and groups left of centre are ultimately involved in that debate. When you say you can't sympathise with that speech or get deported, that's a serious problem."

Mr. Hoffman adds that the case has had a "chilling effect" on political debate within the Arab-American community.



Young refugees: AOHR sees no just solution for their plight until the Arab World respects its citizens rights

Arabs who look after their own

By Nadia Hijab

"WE are not with or against any Arab government... We are with the Arab citizen," says a member of the executive of the Arab Organisation for Human Rights (AOHR). "Our work is different to that of Amnesty International in that they deal with certain political and civil rights. We try to defend all human rights — civil, economic, religious, social and cultural." The AOHR also watches freedom of expression, movement and association, trades union laws, and women's status.

The AOHR is really a delayed reaction to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. Then, although there was an international outcry, Arab reaction was muted. Some thinkers have tried to come to terms with the lessons of 1982. Why had the Arab people not responded to the brutal 80-day siege of Beirut as they would have, say, in Nasser's day? Had they been crushed beyond humanity?

The establishment of such an organisation indicates a new maturity in the Arab world. Hitherto, Arab governments have staved off demands for democracy on the grounds that the people are not yet "ready" for it; that they are too busy liberating Palestine and cannot

afford dissent; that they are too busy with developing education, health, infrastructure; and so on.

Intellectuals often acquiesced in these arguments. They agreed that Arabs should not "wash their dirty linen in public," particularly as they were under attack on all sides — from Israel and its supporters, and in the cartoon strips of Western media. Now, while they continue to respond to Israeli aggression and to Western stereotyping, it is significant that some intellectuals have decided to use the public washing of dirty linen as one of their weapons.

There is growing conviction that the Arabs will never have the power to bring about a just solution of the Palestinian question, or achieve any self-reliant economic and political development until human rights are respected. Thus the AOHR will mainly focus on human rights in the Arab world, although the situation of the Palestinians under occupation forms part of its brief.

The intensity of human rights violations varies. In its recent three-year report on human rights in the Arab world, the AOHR highlights violations in each state, listing all the means that have been used to break the spirit of the Arab citizen.

The human rights advocates of the AOHR do not aim to overthrow existing regimes: many coups have taken place in the Arab world and new regimes have simply been equally repressive. The aim is rather to make it impossible for governments to ignore the demands by Arab citizens for their rights, which will gradually lead to change in the system.

In the Gulf states, for example, the most common violations include the banning of political and cultural association. In Syria and Iraq, the organisation highlights detentions without trial, and severe measures against political opponents. In Jordan, it pinpoints the absence of academic freedom.

In the Democratic Republic of Yemen, it mentions political executions after the January 1986 power struggle; in the Republic of Yemen, the deteriorating conditions in jails. In Egypt and Sudan, it notes the considerable number of "exceptional" and emergency laws. In North Africa, it highlights inter alia the situation of the trades unions.

So far, over 155 cases of human rights violations from 19 Arab countries have been brought to the organisation's attention. Because there is so little coverage of

its activities in the Arab world (with the notable exception of the Egyptian, mainly opposition, press), there has been no dramatic increase in the number of cases.

In each case, the AOHR has contacted the governments concerned. It has had replies from seven governments, though some deny any problem exists.

There were a few successes. The Egyptian government responded to a request to study jail conditions; Jordan freed a detainee; Libya allowed a visit to a detainee; and Sudan met with a delegation to discuss emergency legislation.

The AOHR was particularly active in Sudan before the collapse of the Numeiri regime, where it sought to stop the inhumane application of emergency laws. Its stand on human rights in those days earned it the gratitude of the present government, which meant that the organisation was, after all, able to hold its first general assembly in an Arab country.

This assembly had been scheduled for Cairo in November 1986 — indeed, some of the members in the U.S. and Europe had already arrived to attend it. Although the organisation has

had permission to set up its headquarters in Cairo for the past three years, the Egyptian government would not allow the meeting.

The AOHR believes that its rights report was leaked to Arab governments which in turn put pressure on Cairo to ban the meeting. A case has now been filed by the AOHR against the Egyptian government. Sudan agreed to host the meeting in January 1987. All the Arab ambassadors were invited to attend but not one came. This pleased the organisers because, they said, "it means we have offended all Arab governments equally."

So far, the AOHR has branches in only two Arab countries — Egypt and Sudan. A third is being established in Morocco. There are affiliated groups in Jordan and Tunisia. Branches have also been set up in France, Austria and Britain. There is an associated group in Switzerland. A similar organisation has been established and registered in the U.S., and is closely linked to the AOHR. Last month, the organisation petitioned the U.N. for consultative status and was refused. However, it intends to

apply again.

The AOHR publishes its own journal in Arabic, now in its twentieth issue, as well as newsletters (in Arabic and English), and urgent releases when necessary. New offices have been set up in Geneva (address: POB 82,1211 Geneva 28). Thus there will always be somewhere to go if all Arab doors are closed. Funding comes from membership subscriptions and individual contributions; because of the recession in the region, the group only managed to raise \$25,000 last year.

The AOHR is aware that there is still a long way to go. Arab governments do not yet treat it with the respect they reluctantly give international groups, because, AOHR says, "they totally disregard Arab public opinion." There is also an uphill struggle in the West. One report notes the rise in anti-Arab feeling in Europe. It comments, with some bitterness, that European authorities might not be so indifferent to the rights of Arab migrants, "had it not been for the mounting violation of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms in the Arab world itself" — The Guardian.

PLO factions seek compromise formula over Egypt

(Continued from page 1)

which have been playing a fundamental role in efforts to bridge the gap between the PFLP and Fateh, were seeking an inter-factional agreement regarding the limit of the PLO's relations with all Arab countries. This agreement, the sources said, will not be publicised.

Meanwhile, Fateh was still adhering to its position against equating "hostility and opposition to Camp David and closing all doors with Cairo," according to sources close to Fateh. The sources said the movement was against severing of relations with any Arab government, "regardless of whether it was fighting the Palestinians and the PLO."

The sources said that Fateh had asked the PFLP and other factions to find a formula which could also define, clearly and candidly, the PLO's position on Syria. At the same time, the sources said, Fateh was also firmly against any resolution that would close the doors against Damascus.

During his presentation, Mr.

Mustafa explained that the PFLP was strongly advocating severing contacts with Cairo since "experiences of the last few years indicated that contacts could lead to an endorsement of the Camp David policies."

Mr. Mustafa, however, criticised his own faction on two major points: First, that it used to believe that Palestinian unity was dependent on a strong strategic alliance with Syria. "Now the PFLP believes that the Palestinian unity is the key to an alliance with Syria," he was quoted as saying.

Second, he criticised his group's previous precondition that it would attend a Palestinian dialogue only if all other factions attended. "That was a wrong assessment," he was quoted as saying. "The dialogue is in itself necessary to bridge the gaps and promote understanding in order to formulate a solid basis for national Palestinian unity," he said.

He also said that both Fateh and his group and other factions were wrong in going too far in

attacking and launching scathing campaigns against each other. He was clearly referring to his group's labelling of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat as a traitor and Arafat's charges that anti-Arafat factions were lackeys and tools of Arab governments.

In conclusion, Mr. Mustafa called on all factions to sign "a pledge of honour" so that no future political difference would lead to armed conflicts or estrangements.

Algeria has also been very active in trying to ensure the success of the Palestinian dialogue. On Wednesday, senior Algerian officials met separately with deputy commander of PLO forces Khalil Al Wazir and with PFLP leader George Habash in a bid to narrow the Fateh-PFLP differences.

During Wednesday's meetings, Fateh Central Committee Member Salah Khalaf replied to Mr. Mustafa's address. Mr. Khalaf also reviewed the line pursued by Fateh since 1982. He was said to have conceded that Fateh's assessment of political moves and steps "have not been right all the

time." But Mr. Khalaf, who himself was critical within Fateh of Mr. Arafat's policy line throughout the last three years, tried to explain the circumstances and conditions that prompted Fateh to move along the lines it did since 1982.

But he strongly agreed with Mr. Mustafa on the need for a "pledge of honour" among all factions and also criticised Fateh and the PFLP for the scathing and insulting campaigns which they have been waging against each other.

Meanwhile, reports from Damascus said Syrian President Hafez Al Assad met with Algerian Foreign Minister Ahmad Taleh Ibrahim who delivered to him a message from Algerian President Chadli Benjedid. According to informed Algerian sources here, the message contained an Algerian and Palestinian reiteration that the ongoing dialogue and proposed PNC session were "by no means a challenge or confrontation with any Arab party or side."

Tindemans begins talks

(Continued from page 1)

Rifai who earlier returned from London.

Mr. Tindemans was expected to brief Jordanian officials on his efforts within the EC, and compare notes on efforts by His Majesty King Hussein — currently in London — vis-a-vis the convening of the conference.

In Brussels, Belgian government sources quoted by Reuter on Tuesday said Mr. Tindemans' talks in Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia would focus on the obstacles to convening a conference as well as details of how it might be organised, its terms of reference and who would take part.

Palestinians continue protests

(Continued from page 1)

editorial said the detention policy "is driving the situation further and further away from the possibility of peace... we demand the right to freedom of expression."

Israel Radio quoted Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin as saying the army had arrested more than 100 Arabs since an

Israeli woman was burned to death in a firebomb attack on Saturday in the occupied West Bank.

After the woman's killing, settlers set fire to Arab cars and destroyed Arab property.

During a meeting on Tuesday with settlers, Mr. Rabin said the army had deployed more troops to quell anti-Israeli protests.

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Exhibition combines quality of scholarship, puzzles of ancient history

By Rami G. Khouri
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The thrill of archaeological discovery, the quality of French scholarship and the puzzles of ancient history have all come together in a small but very high quality exhibition of artifacts, drawings and photographs from two important antiquities sites being excavated in Jordan by a joint French-Jordanian team.

The exhibit, at the French Cultural Centre in Jabal Luwaidh until April 23, provides an excellent synthesis of the various aspects of archaeological and historical research and discovery, as

these can be shown by the work taking place at the two sites of Khirbet es-Samra and Fedin. Both sites are being excavated by a team from the Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem and the Jordanian Department of Antiquities, under the field direction of Father Jean-Baptiste Humbert of the Ecole Biblique.

Khirbet es-Samra, 15 kilometres north-east of Zera, was an important stop along the ancient Nabataean-Roman route that linked Petra in south Jordan with Bosra in south Syria. It has been excavated since 1978, and has produced much material from the Roman, Byzantine and Umayyad eras.

It is thought to be the site

called Hadita on the Peutinger Table, a Roman road map of the ancient world, and photos show the well preserved Roman road that passed 500 metres east of the site. There are large drawings of several inscriptions found on milestones that marked the distance along the Roman road, dating from around 110 A.D. to 300 A.D. The Roman period fortress is clearly shown in photos and plans, alongside two Roman era pagan altars, one of which was reused in a Byzantine church.

In the Byzantine period, the 200 x 220 metre site of Khirbet es-Samra had at least 8 churches, with some high quality floor mosaics shown in photographs, drawings and plans. These mosaics are all covered on the site now, so this is a chance to see them for those interested in this ancient art form. The churches were used well into the Umayyad era, providing more evidence of the religious tolerance that existed in the first century of the Islamic era.

One of the intriguing aspects of the site derives from the large cemetery, from which over 500 stone funerary steles have been recovered; 87 of them are inscribed, with 39 in Greek and 48 in a rare ancient language known as Syro-Palestinian. Resembling Kufic, the language is very rare in this part of the Near East, and one of the mysteries of the site relates to the origins and status of the people who used this language, for none of the churches have inscriptions in this language. The funerary steles are mostly inscribed with crosses, indicating that these people were Christian. The names on their tombstones are a combination of biblical, Arab, Nabataean, Palmyran, Greek and Latin.

Also on exhibit are some architectural pieces from Byzantine churches at Samra, nicely carved marble fragments of chancel screens, columns and capitals. Also from the Byzantine and Umayyad periods are some complete pottery vessels recovered from the churches, and black basalt basins used to prepare food.

The second site depicted in the exhibition is Fedin, located in the middle of the modern town of Mafrqa, which was only excavated last year, though the site was identified earlier this century. Fedin comprises three distinct but adjacent ruins from the Iron Age (around the 8th Century B.C.), the Umayyad era, and foundations of a castle that is either Medieval Arab or Ottoman.

The excavations uncovered a corner of a massive structure that was part of the Iron Age fortified site, measuring 70 x 50 metres. The investigation of this site was suspended when the archaeologists came upon a room from the Umayyad period, with a very rich collection of fine Umayyad bronze pieces; these included a brazier decorated with mythical Roman era figures and scenes, an incense burner, and two small ram and elephant moulds thought to have been used to prepare bread or cakes.

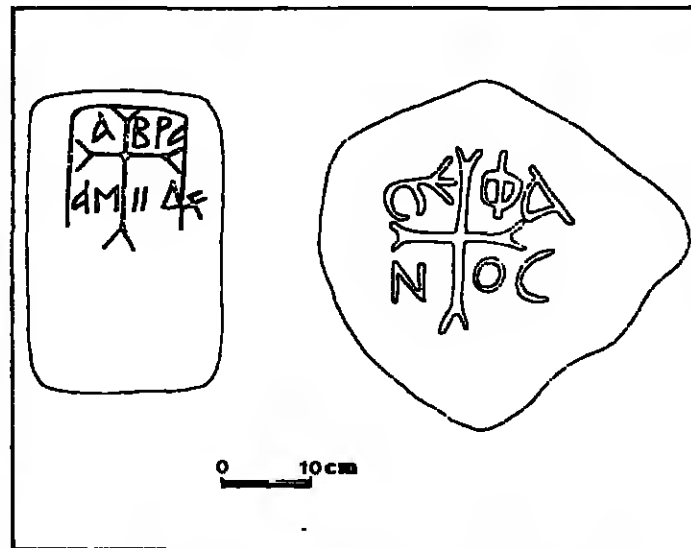
This is the first time these pieces have been displayed in Jordan, and are well worth seeing for an appreciation of the technological and artistic talent of the Umayyad inhabitants of this area. Other Umayyad period items on display are carved ivory boxes and palettes, glass objects, decorative stucco pieces, stoneware cooking pots and lamp fragments, and assorted pottery pieces.

The site, known from literary references, is thought to have been the home of a wealthy local prince or governor, given the high quality of the objects found there. It was destroyed and abandoned sometime at the end of the Umayyad period, around the middle of the 8th Century A.D. Before that, it was used during the Byzantine period, as evidenced by the remains of a small church or chapel, with mosaic floor and marble columns.

One of the sadder aspects of the dig is what it shows us about the vulnerability of Jordan's antiquities, for the Medieval Arab or Ottoman fort whose foundations are visible on the site was only destroyed in recent decades. The exhibit includes a photograph of



The excavated main entrance of the Roman fortress at Khirbet es-Samra (above), and (below) funerary steles inscribed in Greek.



the standing square fort taken in 1924, looking very much like the Ottoman forts at Qatranab and Hasa. The photo also shows part of a massive water cistern, which has also been destroyed by bulldozer activity in recent years. Excavations at both sites will

continue in coming years, but for those who may not wish to trek out into the fringes of the basalt desert of north-eastern Jordan this is an excellent opportunity to see some of the finest archaeological objects that have been discovered in Jordan in recent years.



Drawing of bronze decorative elements on the Umayyad era brazier from Fedin

Three very different exhibitions display their own spirit

By Meg Abu Hamdan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Three exhibitions of very different kinds of art opened in Amman this week. Including the Jordanian designs of Carol Gargour Al Younsi, the ceramics of Jim Masoo and the watercolours of Hugo De Reede, they not only involve the use of very different media but are also totally different in message and spirit.

Entitled "Clay Hearts and Clay Birds," Jim Mason's exhibition at the British Council combines traditional, functional forms with sculptural pieces based on the components of the former. Works like the "Guardian Series" and "Heartbeat" are almost like collages or constructions of what seem to be basic shapes — the rim of a plate, the base of a goblet, a handle, the centre of a vase — which have been put together to form strange off-beat pieces. Mason calls them his "icons," made directly from his response to the minaret with its "symbolic surge upwards, implying some penetration of space." He sees these pieces as "celebratory" and as models for bigger versions in other materials.

Glazes

Unifying these pieces with goblets, bowls and other functional ceramics in the collection are their glazes. Using locally available materials such as basalt, dolomite, limestone and olive wood ash, Masoo produces muted organic colours that lends his work a feeling of antiquity. Aged and weathered, many of his bowls look like they have been lifted straight out of the museum, while the "icons" these glazes create an interesting paradox of old with new.

Recurring throughout Masoo's work are the same motifs — those derived from local rug designs, serious in their simplicity and the more frivolous tiny birds which appear in the unlikelyst places, cheeky, fun and vital. It is through the birds — for which Masoo provides water — and through the titles for some of the pieces — for example "Another utterly useless teapot" — that Masoo's irrepressible sense of humour bubbles up adding touch of magic that brings the whole show to life.

Intricate, floral designs

Down the road at this Alia Art Gallery is the work of the young, locally born artist Carol Gargour Al Younsi. Now living in Spain, Mrs. Al Younsi produces well-

executed and intricate floral designs in a variety of media. In bold, confident lines of black china ink, the bird and leaf motifs rise inexorably upwards, like growth itself. Bending and swaying as if touched by a spring breeze, the leaves and the shapes between them carry different patterns and designs, denoting texture and movement. Interlaced with gold and silver, or with slim lines of bright colours, these predominantly black and white pieces are strikingly bold. In contrast are softer paintings worked in gentler colours — deep pinks and turquoises — and instead of the thrusting buds, they often portray the shedding of petals as growth passes into decay, spring to autumn. Although principally decorative, Mrs. Al Younsi's work is also thoughtful and appealing.

Art and archaeology

At the Petra Bank Art Gallery is another appealing exhibition, but appealing in a very different way. Hugo De Reede is a Dutch-born professional artist who has been working in Jordan on the excavation of the late Bronze Age site of Deir Alla. Drawn to Jordan by a deep interest in archaeology, De Reede's task has been to draw all the artifacts as they have been discovered by the two teams — one from Lieden University the other from Yarmouk — working on the dig. In between times De Reede found time to travel around the country making watercolours of all the major sites including Petra, Jerash, Qal'at Al Rabad, Beidha and Wadi Rum. His careful, very realistic renditions have a charm of their own especially as De Reede generally depicts the ruins and the artifacts as being in slightly better condition than they are, rather as if he is willing them to be as they were in their heyday.

Like De Reede, we have all wondered, as we have stood before those staggeringly beautiful monuments just what these places must have been like when they were first built. This particularly true in Petra and as we have wandered past the seemingly endless number of carefully carved rock facades we have all at one time or another longed to know just how the city must have looked when it was alive with the bustling activity of the people who lived there two millennia ago.

Vision of Petra

De Reede however has taken his ideas one step further than most of us and has drawn his vision

of Petra. So there we see the city fully paved, down which comes a caravan bearing the ower bride for the young Nabataean king who stands before the altar — still to be seen today — to the god Dushara and his wife Allat. And there is the last of the Nabataean kings, Rabbel II being buried in his final resting place — the place we know as the Khazneh, the Treasury. Romantic and full of clever and witty touches these entertaining paintings would be perfect for a book on the subject and although these two paintings were not made for that purpose, many of the others on exhibition are for a book De Reede is writing with Professor Henk Franken which will form an introduction to archaeology for younger readers.

The desire to draw things in their pristine condition runs throughout De Reede's work — in his watercolours of Turkey and in his depictions of Assyrian relief — and it is this that gives De Reede's work its deeply satisfying appeal. All three exhibitions run until April 16th.

Ancient Mesopotamian culture unearthed in Iraq

By Subby Haddad
Reuters

BAGHDAD — Not far from the Gulf war's southern front, French archaeologists are excavating what they say is the oldest site ever found in the long history of Mesopotamian civilisation.

The head of the French team, Dr. Jean Daniel Forest of the Sorbonne, says the new discovery is more than 8,000 years old, some 1,500 years older than previously known sites.

He told Reuters the dig represented evidence of a completely new Mesopotamian culture, to which the French have given the name Oueili after the nearest contemporary village.

Other archaeologists are taking a more cautious view. "It is too early at this stage to speak of Oueili as the earliest culture in Mesopotamia," Dr. Warwick Ball, head of a British archaeological expedition to Iraq, told Reuters.

Dr. Behnam Abu Al Souf, regarded as Iraq's authority on ancient Mesopotamia, agrees. "The time is not ripe yet to say it is the earliest in Mesopotamia," he said.

But Professor Jean Hout of the

Sorbonne, who is analysing the finds, said some aspects of Oueili culture are new to Mesopotamia and earlier archaeological layers have yet to be uncovered.

Oueili is about 200 km north-west of Iraq's strategic port city of Basra outside which Iraqi and Iranian forces are locked in combat.

"Where ows of the new find proliferates in academic circles, a new entry will have to be added to the Mesopotamian chronological table," said Forest, who has directed excavation teams at several sites in Iraq.

"What our expedition found during this and previous forays since 1980 is unlike anything else uncovered in the course of 100 years of continuous digs in Mesopotamia," he added.

Forest said the find included a building made of bricks constructed of fine clay mixed with straw and a dwelling house with several granaries.

He said Oueili pottery comprised bowls, dishes, cups, jars, anthropomorphic and animal figurines, beads, hoses, sickles, spinning devices and stamp-seal amulets.

Samples from the find were

sent to the Centre Scientifique de Monaco for radiocarbon dating and were put at some 8,000 years old. Forest said that previous to Oueili, the earliest culture known in southern Iraq was 6,500 years old.

It is usually associated with Eridu, present-day Abu Shahrein 170 km north-west of Basra.

The archaeologist said Oueili was inhabited long before Eridu and earlier than the Halaf period in the north which flourished in the fifth millennium B.C.

Full excavation of the Oueili site presents a number of problems and as a result the site may never be completely unearthed.

Firstly, the find is covered with 3-6 metres of earth. Secondly, and more seriously, parts of it are under subterranean water.

"We are still far from having a thorough picture of life, origin, economic activity and religion of the Oueili people," Forest said.

Another Sorbonne team is set to begin excavating the 10-hectare mound covering the site.

"This time we will dig through the core of the mound down to the lowest levels and uncover as large an area as possible," said Forest.

Randa Habib's

Do you realise what time it is?

DO you have a friend living in Austria, a son studying in London, a daughter in Paris, a boy-friend in Spain, or a relative in Germany? If so, I pity you. You don't sleep much these days, do you? You also keep your friends and relatives abroad awake with your late night calls.

But if your interlocutor lives in the U.S. or in Japan, he or she is lucky. From now on you will be the one to have disturbed nights for a change, and he or she will be getting your calls at hours that suit him or her perfectly — that is with the time difference. Anyhow, in both cases whether you call Europe, the States or the Far-East, you are sleeping less.

You must have guessed. I am talking about the reduced telephone rates offered by the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) for international calls. These rates have been reduced by up to 50 per cent and apply after midnight. The offer is, of course, tempting for many subscribers, and people are staying up late in order to take advantage of the offer. But does it have to be so late?

The idea of reduced rates on international calls is aimed at encouraging Ammanites to use the telephone more, because in the past they often had their children or friends call them from abroad where the fees are much more reasonable.

So the decision of the TCC is basically a good one: We called for it in the past and we applaud it now. However, it still needs some modification. Firstly, we should be able to have special rates on weekends and holidays, as in many other countries. Maybe the hesitation of the TCC lies in the fact that our weekends are working days in many countries abroad and in that case companies would be the first to benefit from such an arrangement. Secondly why should the night rates start at midnight and not at 8 p.m. or even 10 p.m. which is a fair time as companies are closed at this hour and presumably most calls would be private ones.

Meat-eating dinosaur called Claws on show at London museum

By Sandra Maler
Reuters

LONDON — Claws is out to grab London.

Remains of the huge, 134-million-year-old newly discovered breed of dinosaur went on public display at London's Museum of Natural History this month.

The discovery of the prehistoric animal's fossilised bones has been hailed as one of the most exciting dinosaur finds this century.

The dinosaur has become popularly known as Claws, but its scientific name is *Baryonyx walkeri*.

Baryonyx is Greek for "heavy claw" and *walkeri* is for William Walker, a fossil-collecting plumber who in May 1983 discovered the first piece of the dinosaur — an enormous claw — south of London.

"The whole thing is so lucky, it's unbelievable," Walker told journalists when the exhibition opened. "It's a massive creature and the one thing that popped out of the ground was the claw. That was marvellous. If a bone had popped out, they wouldn't have batted an eyelid."

Claws, who lived in swamps in what is now the southern county of Surrey and was preserved because it died at the bottom of a lake, is the only reasonably complete skeleton of a large flesh-eating dinosaur found in Britain this century.

"I didn't have a soo so this will carry on the family name," said Walker, 59, beaming. "The wife and I hadn't really planned on this addition to our age but we'll accept it."

Walker, who became interested in fossils 14 years ago when his younger daughter Rita took up geology at school, said he knew he had found a piece of dinosaur but did not realise the importance of his find until three weeks later when his son-in-law decided to show the fossil to the

But they already know what Claws looked like. Because it differed so much from other dinosaurs — in possessing at least one disproportionately large clawbone — it was designated as the representative of a new species, genus and family.

The family is *Baryonychiidae*, the genus *Baryonyx* and the type-species *walkeri*.

Dr. Alan Chargin, the museum's director in charge of prehistoric animals, says the beast was about nine or 10 metres long, three or four metres (12 or 16 feet) tall when standing on its hind legs and weighed around two tonnes. It had a narrow skull with a low snout, a long ocell and large powerful arms. The clawbone found by Walker was probably the thumb of the dinosaur's hand and would have been covered with a horny sheath, experts said.

"Its front legs were relatively longer and more robust than those of other theropods (types of dinosaur) so it might have been able to walk on all fours too — which no other theropod could do," they added.

JORDAN MARKET PLACE

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Aquino seeks more U.S. military aid

Muslim rebels admit getting foreign help

MANILA (R) — Philippine President Corazon Aquino asked the United States Wednesday to speed up delivery of helicopters as 17 more people, including a former air force chief, died in the war with Communist rebels.

A presidential palace announcement said Mrs. Aquino appealed for stepped up U.S. military aid during an hour-long meeting with a three-man U.S. congressional mission headed by Democratic Representative Gillespie Montgomery.

Mrs. Aquino also asked the United States to accelerate delivery of drugs and medical equipment worth \$10 million that Washington had promised during her visit to the United States last September.

The medical supplies were largely intended for soldiers fighting Communist rebels.

The U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee voted last week to approve a \$343.3 million package of mili-

taxes." If killed by the NPA, Gen. Rancudo was the highest military officer, active or retired, to be killed by guerrillas in the 18-year insurgency.

Gen. Ito said that while the rebels were the prime suspects in the Rancudo murder, investigators were also looking into other angles, such as business rivalry. The military said the rebels fled after taking two pistols that the retired general wore tucked in his waistband.

In other incidents, government forces killed 12 rebels and captured two NPA camps in weekend operations in Surigao Del Sur province, on Mindanao Island in the southern Philippines, and killed two insurgents in a clash Tuesday in Ilocos Norte province.

A military spokesman said suspected Communist New People's Army (NPA) rebels shot dead retired Air Force Chief Maj. Gen. Jose Rancudo in his country house on Monday night after he refused to pay "revolutionary

west of Mindanao, and on central Negros Island.

More than 800 people have died since fighting flared up last February after a 60-day ceasefire ended.

Meanwhile Muslim rebel chief Nur Misuari warned in an interview published Wednesday that his guerrilla army will "spread the flames of war" across the Philippines' Mindanao Island if peace talks fail and government forces provoke new clashes.

In a separate television interview Tuesday night, Mr. Misuari admitted for the first time that his forces were receiving financial assistance from other countries.

Mr. Misuari's warning followed the suspension of peace talks between his Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and President Aquino's government on Muslim demands for autonomy for 23 southern Philippine provinces.

Another rebel and a militiaman were killed in skirmishes Monday in Zamboanga Del Sur, on the

32 feared drowned in Indonesian boat accident

JAKARTA (R) — At least 32 people are presumed drowned after a boat crowded with passengers sank in Lake Toba in north Sumatra Tuesday, police said Wednesday.

Police said the small wooden boat laden with a cargo of onions was probably carrying 60 people. Four bodies have been recovered so far and 28 people were presumed dead, rescue workers said.

The lake is a popular tourist destination in Indonesia. The boat sank just 400 metres off shore in calm weather.

Rescue workers also reported that at least 23 gold-panners were swept away and drowned last week by flash floods on the island of Central Sulawesi. Two others are still missing.

The rescue workers said a group of 25 people who had been panning for gold at a camp next to the Malai River for three months were swamped by a sudden flood during the night.

A government spokesman in Central Sulawesi said rescue workers were still hunting for the two missing panners.

Nine hurt by explosions during Bolivian protest

LA PAZ, Bolivia (AP) — A stick of dynamite blew up in front of the U.S. embassy during a protest march, injuring two people, witnesses said, and explosives set off at another area of the march injured seven others.

In Washington, the State Department said an explosive device thrown by one of the protest marchers struck the building where the U.S. embassy is located and bounced back into the crowd.

The U.S. embassy regional security officer, an American,

and a Bolivian policeman guarding the embassy were slightly injured, along with some of the marchers, the statement said.

More than 12,000 workers and students were marching to protest government austerity measures, witnesses said.

An AP photographer at the scene said the dynamite explosion hurt two people. At another area of the march, a Molotov cocktail and a dynamite stick — a blasting cap with a piece of dynamite attached — exploded, hurting seven people, witnesses said.

Supreme court orders stay of execution for Gandhi's killers

NEW DELHI (R) — The Indian supreme court has granted a stay of execution to three Sikhs sentenced to death for the murder on Oct. 31, 1984 of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

Two judges ordered the delay pending final appeals to the supreme court. No date had been set for the executions.

The Delhi high court confirmed in December the sentence of death by hanging handed down

on Jan. 22 last year by a Delhi district court. The three men have appealed against both judgments.

Former Sikh bodyguard constable Satwant Singh, 23, was convicted of murdering Mrs. Gandhi in the garden of her official residence after a 254-day trial. Sub-inspector Balbir Singh, 46, and civil servant Kehar, 51, were convicted of conspiracy to murder.

1 killed in U.S. court blast

KOKOMO, Ind. (R) — A defendant in a drug case died and five other people were injured when a bomb he was carrying in a briefcase exploded in a courthouse in the central Indiana town of Kokomo, police said.

They said deputies in the Howard county courthouse became suspicious of the briefcase carried by Robert Gray, a 46-year-old defendant on charges of dealing

the hallucinogenic drug LSD. The deputies brought Gray and his lawyer to the sheriff's office, where he "apparently detonated the bomb," police said.

Gray died and the sheriff was seriously injured and taken to hospital, where he underwent surgery. The lawyer and three others suffered less serious injuries.

Four workers killed in Canadian mine avalanche

SUDBURY, Ontario (AP) — A pile of ore slid nearly 300 metres down a mine shaft, killing four workers who were crushed when a barrier above them collapsed under the avalanche's weight, company officials said.

"We were not successful. We have four fatally injured miners," said Morry Brown, director of public affairs in Sudbury for mine owner Inco Ltd. "We were able to get in to recover the individuals, and they were pronounced dead at the mine site."

Rescuers had failed to make contact with the trapped men shortly after the accident Tuesday at the copper and nickel mine in northern Ontario, which won an international award for safety last

year. It was the second fatal mining accident for Inco in the last month and the third in Canada.

Ken Cherney, an Inco spokesman, said the men were 1,150 metres underground and inspecting a shaft at the mine in Levack, north west of Sudbury, when the accident occurred. Inco has been mining nickel and copper in the area for nearly a century.

The ore had been blasted and collected at a "loading point" and was waiting to be removed from the mine when it fell onto a protective metal barrier over the workers' heads.

"They weren't struck by the falling ore, they were struck by the roof falling in," Ross said.

Scuffle breaks out in Japanese parliament

TOKYO (R) — Scuffles broke out in the Japanese parliament Wednesday as angry opposition members tried to get at the Budget Committee chairman when he announced the pushing through of a controversial stimulatory budget by the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

LDP members yelling "victory, victory" surrounded Budget Committee Chairman Shigetani Sumada, protecting him with their bodies from the pushing and shoving opposition members as he announced the decision to the Lower House Budget Committee.

Security men forced a way through the crush to rescue the ageing chairman who was buffeted by the irate opposition tried to reach him.

The budget for fiscal 1987, which started on April 1, includes a highly unpopular sales tax and is also supposed to help meet demands from Japan's major trade partners that it do more in its own economy to boost world growth, instead of just earning more export profits.

The budget will now be passed automatically in one month's time, even if the upper house objects.

Honduras confirms plans to buy U.S. jet fighters

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (AP) — The Honduran government announced Tuesday it will accept delivery in December of four advanced fighter jets from the United States, the first of up to 24 it is to receive.

U.S. officials in Tegucigalpa said in March that negotiations were nearly finished on the sale of F-5E fighters to Honduras, a key American ally in Central America and home base for many of the U.S.-supported contra rebels fighting Nicaragua's leftist government.

Honduran military officials had considered buying Kfir fighter jets from Israel but gave up that idea "because of technical details," army spokesman Col. Manuel Suarez Benavides said Tuesday.

Honduras expects to receive 18 to 24 U.S.-built jets over 18 months, government sources

said. Previously, the air force has relied on 12 French super Mystere B-2 light bombers, first flown in the late 1950s.

The replacement of the old bombers would assure Honduras' continued air superiority in the region.

Honduras has one of the smallest armies in Central America, about 17,500 men, and has long relied on its air force as its primary line of defence.

Neighbouring Nicaragua has the region's largest army, estimated at more than 100,000 troops, and a fleet of Soviet-built helicopters, but it does not have any fighter jets.

Sources in the U.S. embassy and President Jose Azcona's office confirmed the report of the sale but declined to reveal the price.

Contra chief Robelo resigns

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica (R) — Nicaraguan rebel chief Alfonso Robelo has said he intends to step down from the three-man directorate of the contra's main political umbrella group.

The announcement, coming just over a month after the resignation of Arturo Cruz, was considered a severe blow to the U.S.-backed Nicaraguan rebel movement and likely to move it far to the right.

Mr. Robelo, like Mr. Cruz, is a political moderate whose popularity in Washington has been key to the Reagan administration's efforts to win continuing U.S. support for the rebels, known as contras from the Spanish word for counterrevolutionary.

In a telephone interview with Reuters from his exile home here, Mr. Robelo, 47, acknowledged that his departure would lead to "a revival of the forces of Adolfo Calero" within the contra movement.

He added that he had suffered "periodic and consistent problems" with Mr. Calero but declined further comment, except to say that Mr. Calero was not his enemy.

"My enemies are those in the Sandinista National Liberation Front," he said.

Mr. Calero, a staunch rightist, heads the main rebel army, the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN).

Peking accuses Hanoi of occupying Chinese islands

PEKING (AP) — China accused Vietnam on Wednesday of sending troops to an island in the South China Sea claimed by both countries.

"Recently the Vietnamese authorities have once again encroached upon China's territorial integrity and sovereignty by brazenly sending troops to Baotiao Island of China's Nansha Islands and illegally occupied it," Foreign Ministry spokesman Li Zhaoxing told a weekly news conference.

"The Chinese government has stated on many occasions that Nansha Islands as well as Xisha Islands, Zhongsha Islands and Dongsha Islands have always been China's sacred territory and that China has the indisputable sovereign right over these islands and their adjacent waters," Mr. Li said.

The Nansha Islands are also known as the Spratlys, while the other islands named are part of the Paracels chain. The two chains are in the South China Sea with China to the north, Vietnam

to the west, Malaysia to the south and the Philippines to the east.

China and Vietnam, in addition to Taiwan, long have claimed sovereignty over both island groups. China stations troops in the Paracels, while Vietnam holds a few islands in the more southern Spratlys chain.

Mr. Li did not say how many Vietnamese troops were occupying the island or when they arrived.

The government "strongly condemns" Vietnam for occupying some islands in the Nansha group and demanded their withdrawal.

"The Chinese government reserves the right to recover these occupied islands at an appropriate time," he said without elaboration.

Mr. Li denied that China occupied Indian territory last year and said a valley India claims to hold actually belongs to Peking.

Mr. Li made the comments in response to a question about the Indian Foreign Ministry's accusation that China had occupied the Sumdorong Valley.

COLUMNS 7&8

Mozart manuscripts to be auctioned

LONDON (R) — Musical manuscripts by Mozart are to be sold in London next month in what auctioneers called the most important music manuscript sale this century. Sotheby's Auction House said 500 pages representing nine symphonies by Mozart were expected to fetch a record price on May 22. The previous music-manuscript record of £330,000 (\$534,000) was paid in 1982 in London for the first full-scale working draft of Igor Stravinsky's "rite of spring." The symphonies, composed in the 1770s before Mozart's 20th birthday, are written in brown ink on thick cream paper. They represent almost a quarter of his works and had been in the care of an anonymous collector. All other known works by Mozart are in public collections in libraries around the world, including Poland, West Berlin, Washington, New York, Vienna, Paris and East Berlin.

Diamond merchants unveil \$1m swimsuit

TOKYO (R) — Tokyo diamond merchants unveiled a swimsuit Wednesday billed as the world's most expensive, a black leather creation studded with diamonds worth \$1.5 million. The bathing suit, created by Tokyo designer Kiyoko Shimura, contained 104 stones weighing a total of 62.35 carats. It was unveiled at a diamond show along with a matching diamond necklace. Shimura said she was nervous working with the precious stones, the largest of which weighed 6.14 carats. "All of those diamonds are real," she said. An organiser said the swimsuit, which is to go on display for 10 days at a department store, "is for sale to anyone willing to pay 200 million yen (\$1.5 million).

Chris Evert divorces husband

FORT LAUDERDALE, Florida (AP) — Tennis star Chris Evert Lloyd became Chris Evert again Tuesday after a brief appearance in court to complete her divorce from British tennis pro John Lloyd. The appointment to complete the divorce had been scheduled for Thursday, but she appeared at the judge's office two days early to wrap up the divorce. "She came in at 9:30 this morning with her attorney and a residency witness and asked if the judge could accommodate them this morning instead of Thursday," said Bunny Costantino, a judicial assistant for Broward Circuit Judge Joseph Price. "They had a waiver from Mr. Lloyd. It was finalised and she's gone back to her maiden name." Bob Kain, agent for Evert, said the financial agreement "is being kept private and confidential."

Dog robs butcher

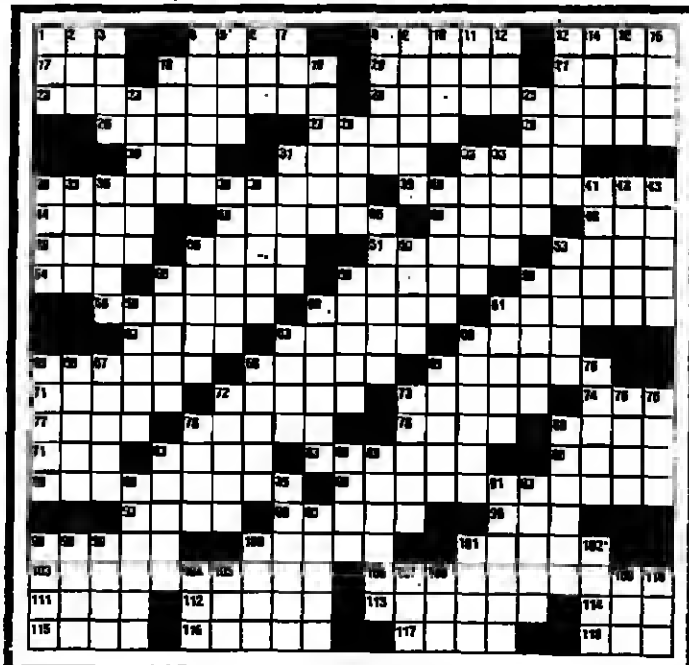
TELFORD, England (AP) — Bob Holmes says a German Shepherd dog has stolen meat from his butcher shop twice and he thinks it was trained to do so. The first time the dog snatched a 5-pound (2.2-kg) bag of sausages from a display table outside. An assistant chased the fleeing hound but it escaped. The next day the dog returned, snatched pork chops from a table and dashed to a waiting car. "A woman got out, took the pork chops and was driven off by the man at the wheel with the dog running after the car," Holmes said in his shop in Telford, Central England. "I was amazed. If this goes on I'll have to think of employing a guard dog to catch the dog thief," the butcher said. Inspector Terry Lowe of Telford police said the dog appeared to have looked over the display before choosing the chops. "The dog was seen to go past the butcher's several times before it snatched the chops," he said.

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

Edited by Herb Ettemann

JAMPAKED
By Dorothy B. Martin

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Last Week's Cryptograms

1. Rebuffed local politician rode into public office on coattails of president.
2. Wait! Could it be what big American industry really needs is just some on-the-job training?
3. World-famous chef was uniquely honored by brimless hat called "the toque of the toques."
4. Some men search forever for the vivacious woman who understands.

CRYPTOGRAMS

1. BJLNYB JYALN BLEKE BDAYJL JCP
SCLEP IC NBB BLSCYXL KLYX CE
JBKP KINILLI. —By Earl Ireland

2. CAZIM QYIM TAXMYF. ORB QZITH EASY
URNO ORB CIU NA CMYNYF OY UFB
REKREBQZY RE NOY NORTH BEAU. —By Connie Rosenfeld

3. KWOBHT BOG SWAMP SALA YKUTT TUM
UGL UG PGMUWAGY AE AHPFAGHPP. —By Norton Rhoades

4. EXNEDI DINE DIVAN EXNAI DIVODN
DINQCCX CA IOA EOZN AOQN QOAL. —By Philip F. Brennan

SOLUTIONS OF LAST WEEK'S PUZZLE

1. BJLNYB JYALN BLEKE BDAYJL JCP
SCLEP IC NBB BLSCYXL KLYX CE
JBKP KINILLI. —By Earl Ireland

2. CAZIM QYIM TAXMYF. ORB QZITH EASY
URNO ORB CIU NA CMYNYF OY UFB
REKREBQZY RE NOY NORTH BEAU. —By Connie Rosenfeld

3. KWOBHT BOG SWAMP SALA YKUTT TUM
UGL UG PGMUWAGY AE AHPFAGHPP. —By Norton Rhoades

4. EXNEDI DINE DIVAN EXNAI DIVODN
DINQCCX CA IOA EOZN AOQN QOAL. —By Philip F. Brennan

Handwritten signature or mark.